











Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



LITERARY ACTIVITY  
OF THE  
GERMAN BAPTIST BRETHREN  
IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

*By*

JOHN S. FLORY, Ph. D.

*Professor of English Language and Literature in Bridgewater College, formerly  
Assistant in English Literature in the University of Virginia.*

---

This Dissertation has been accepted by the Faculty of the University of Virginia as satisfying the requirements in original research for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

ELGIN, ILLINOIS  
BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE.  
1908

Copyright, 1908.

---

BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
Elgin, Illinois.

PX  
7186  
F66 l

## INTRODUCTION

The closing years of the nineteenth and the opening of the twentieth centuries witnessed the birth of a deep and widespread interest in the early history of the Germans who came to Pennsylvania in the first days of that great Commonwealth. The subject has grown in interest, as the records of the past brought to light the doings of these sturdy, conscientious, pious sons of the Fatherland, until today every new phase of the subject is anxiously waited for and warmly welcomed by all who take an interest in our beginnings in our country. Pennsylvania Dutch, once used as a term of ridicule, has become a topic of the most absorbing interest to all who are inclined to look into the history of the past.

To no class of people are these records of the past more intensely interesting than to The Brethren, (Dunkers), for in William Penn's New Colony they found a resting place and began their religious activities in America which have continued with some measure of success until this day. Driven from their homes in the ungracious Vaterland by the persecutions of the established church, they found rest and liberty of conscience in the New World. Strange it is that no sooner had the Luther Reformers thrown off the yoke of Rome than they entered upon a vigorous persecution of all who did not give full assent to their views. And so the Brethren, who had never accepted Romanism

fell under the ban. They were unwilling to accept the filtered product of the Reformation, preferring to go to the undefiled fountain head of God's Word, and as a result were bitterly and cruelly persecuted and driven from their homes by the reformers.

Our Author has laid the church and the reading public generally under many obligations by his pains-taking, careful and conscientious research in order to bring to light the literary activities of our people in the eighteenth century. Not for years has it fallen to my lot to read a book that has afforded so much interest and genuine pleasure as has this work. Some books we read from a sense of duty, others because they were written by our friends and others still because of their real merit and because of the rich value of their contents. In the latter class this work will find a commanding position. It will become an authority on the subject so ably treated.

The Author promises the result of a continuation of his researches in a succeeding volume covering the literary activities of The Brethren for the nineteenth century. Judging from what he has already accomplished we may anticipate a further valuable addition to our literature.

It is sad to reflect that after the destruction of Saur's great printing plant at Germantown, during the Revolutionary war, for more than half a century The Brethren gave but a half-hearted support to educational and literary efforts. This may have been the resultant swing from the scholastic ecclesiasticism from which the fathers suffered so much in Germany, and it went so far that they came to look upon higher

education as a snare of the devil to entrap the humble followers of Christ and to lead them into pride and worldlyism. Be this as it may it was not until the close of the first half of the last century that the printing press became active among us again and higher education began to assume significance. The last quarter of the century witnessed a revival of literary and educational activity among The Brethren rarely surpassed among any people. Through this fruitful field our Author will take us in his next volume, and the hope is expressed that he may be able to finish the work at an early date.

D. L. MILLER.



## PREFACE

In the ensuing pages I have tried to tell the story of the literary activity of the Dunkers during the first period of their history. As such a work has never been undertaken before, I have necessarily been at the disadvantage of having to find my way in regard to many things, and of planning the work without a precedent or guide. If I have given undue prominence to any part of the history or have regarded any part as of too slight importance, the defect may be attributed to error of judgment and lack of experience.

I have not aimed at an exhaustive treatment so much as at a straightforward, unadorned narrative that will give as nearly as possible a correct idea of the position our people occupied in the eighteenth century, and of the value and import of their literary work. If I have succeeded in reconstructing the period to any extent, and in bringing into due prominence the significance of the great achievements in our early history, and by this means of awakening a deeper interest and pride in ourselves as a people, my purpose has been accomplished. I should trust, however, that I have also contributed something to the fund of our information in regard to our history as a denomination. Yet this has been only incidental. My chief aim has been to set forth in a deserving light our accomplishments during the eighteenth century as producers and disseminators of literary work.

I presume it is natural that the student of litera-

ture should in time be led to a consideration of the literature of his church. At least it has been so in this case. I had thought for some years that there must be some interesting literary work connected with the early experiences of the Brethren, but I had no idea of the wealth of material to be found until I undertook the investigation of it some four years ago.

Through the agency of the library of the University of Virginia, with which institution I was at that time connected, the archives of the Virginia State Library at Richmond and of the Library of Congress at Washington were opened to me. From both of these, as well as from the University library, I received valuable aid.

The chief depositories of our early literature, however, are in Philadelphia. Besides several very valuable private collections, two large public collections are housed here. They are in the libraries of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and of the German Society of Pennsylvania respectively. To both of them I was granted free access and found a wealth of material that was far beyond my expectations at first.

The nucleus of the Historical Society's collection is a part of the famous collection of Abraham H. Cassel, the noted antiquary of the Brethren church. His fine collection has unfortunately been broken up and scattered. The choice part of it undoubtedly is in the archives of the Historical Society. A very important part is in the library of Juniata College, another part is at Mt. Morris College, and a smaller part at Bridgewater College.

When I began this work my intention was to write in one volume a literary history of the Brethren church to the present day. The abundance of material in the early part, however, caused me to modify this plan to the extent of treating it in two distinct periods, and in two separate works. The first is now completed and is herewith offered to the public.

In the course of my investigations I have collected a considerable mass of material on the latter period also. It is my intention to continue the narrative and (D. V.) in another volume to bring it down to the present time. To any friends who may have contributed facts pertaining to the later history I now make this statement and general acknowledgment of their services. When the volume is issued suitable credits will be given.

Closing the first period with the end of the eighteenth century divides our history into two nearly equal parts. But the chief reason for choosing this date for the division is the fact that it marks the end of a distinct period of our history. With the close of the Leibert press, three years before the end of the century, the leadership of the Dunkers as producers and disseminators of literature came to an end. And the death of Alexander Mack, Jr., in 1803, marks the passage of that first group of great men who lent lustre to the early history of the church, and who produced the first important body of our church literature.

The conditions prevailing at the beginning of the next century were very different from those that had preceded, and these changed conditions will mark the beginning of the further treatment.

In preparing this work I have gone to original sources wherever possible. I have, however, availed myself of whatever has been written on the subject. I have read the several histories of the Brethren church, by Brumbaugh, by Falkenstein, and by Hollsinger. Where I have received special information I have endeavored to give credit. Matters of undisputed history, however, I have used without acknowledgment to any one. I may have on occasion used almost the exact words of one or another writer unconsciously. I have not been studious to avoid doing so.

In the first chapter I have quoted three times at length. I have done this on purpose to allow the great authorities to speak in their own words on the three important topics there discussed: the original principles of the church, the organization of the church, and the doctrines of the church. These three authorities are Ernest Christopher Hochmann, Alexander Mack, Jr., and Elder D. L. Miller.

Julius F. Sachse's *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania* contains much valuable information about the Sower Bibles. I have consulted it freely and am under obligations to it for many important facts. Seidensticker's *Geschichtsblätter* has also been useful in the preparation of this chapter.

This last named work has likewise been helpful in the study of the Sower newspaper. The works themselves have been the chief source of information, however, in regard to all the periodicals. The newspapers, so far as preserved, are at the Historical Society; the magazines and the almanacs at both the Historical

Society and the German Society (incomplete). I studied them at both places.

The biographical material in chapter V has been collected from a great variety of sources. Among the most important I may mention, Seidensticker's *Geschichtsblätter*, Goebel's *Geschichte des Christlichen Lebens*, Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, the *Chronicon Ephratense*, and the several church histories.

Where the selections of the different authors used have been secured I have indicated in each case. With the exception of one of the letters of Christopher Sower, Sr., I take the responsibility of the translation upon myself. In the prose I have aimed at a literal reproduction of the thought without embellishment or ornament. In the poetry I have thought well to give some variety. The form of the poem in some instances seemed to be an integral part of the poetry; in such cases I have preserved the poetic form, at some expense naturally of poetic quality and of literalness. In other instances I have aimed only to reproduce the thought.

Other works that I have found useful in the preparation of the following pages are Thomas's *History of Printing in America*, Seidensticker's *The First Century of German Printing in America*, *The International Cyclopedia*, Jameson's *Dictionary of United States History*, Rupp's *History of the Religious Denominations in the United States*. Many other works have been consulted, and as far as they have contributed to this volume, credit has been given in the body of the text.

The appendix is of course taken largely from Dr. Seidensticker's work. I have succeeded, however, in adding a considerable number to the works he records. For these additions I am under obligations chiefly to Rev. A. Stapleton of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, and to *The Pennsylvania German*.

I have yet the pleasant duty of acknowledging the personal helpfulness of several friends. To Dr. Charles W. Kent of the University of Virginia, I am under obligations for helpful suggestions and constant encouragement. From the very inception of the work to the present his interest in it and his inspiring encouragement have had much to do with bringing it to completion. Eld. D. L. Miller of Mount Morris, Illinois, has likewise given words of encouragement and direction that have made the work easier. He has also done me the kindness to read my manuscript and has offered valuable suggestions. His interest is further shown by his willingness to supply an introduction to my imperfect work.

My thanks are also due Mr. John S. Patton and Miss Anna Seeley Tuttle, of the University of Virginia library, who have spared no pains in procuring for me the use of any books or documents in their power. To Dr. John W. Jordan of the Historical Society's library in Philadelphia and to Miss L. Herzog of the German Society, I am likewise under obligations for repeated kindnesses and aid.

*Bridgewater College,  
January, 1908.*

JNO. S. FLORY.





# Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century

---

## CHAPTER I.

### GENESIS OF THE GERMAN BAPTIST BRETHREN CHURCH.

In order that the ensuing history may be intelligible, it is necessary to state briefly the main facts in regard to the people whose work is here to receive consideration. It will be of interest to know where, when, and how the German Baptists, or Dunkers, came into being, and the peculiarities of their faith and practice. A history of them as a people is of course not attempted here, but such facts as are necessary to understand their literary work, and the significance of it, must be recorded.

To find the origin of this religious body it is necessary to go back to Germany in the early years of the eighteenth century. This was a time of great social and spiritual unrest. The Protestant Reformation was advancing to its logical result. On all sides there was dissatisfaction with the existing ecclesiastical condition. Discussion was rife. The Reformation had accomplished wonders in eradicating heresies, and elevating the social, moral, and intellectual condition of the people. Yet the established Protestant churches (Lutheran and Reformed) had become intolerant, and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

permitted practices that many of the most advanced thinkers of the time could not reconcile with the Bible teaching. These latter, however, were hopelessly split up among themselves, so that there was no end of beliefs and of interpretations of the inspired Word.

As to the Catholic church, Protestantism had completely broken its power in northern Europe and had eradicated many vile and evil practices. It had dispelled the fog of superstition and ignorance which for centuries had brooded over the minds of the people like a night hag, and had brought them into a day of comparative freedom and light. The masses had advanced in intelligence, until even the poorer classes were manifesting an intelligent interest in the problems of Christianity. Thought was, however, terribly confused; almost everybody was interested in religion and took a hand in discussing it, yet comparatively few would have been able to give a clear, concise statement of what they believed, or why they believed as they did.

Amidst this confusion and wilderness of conflicting opinions, one belief held in common by many of the dissenters tended to draw them together into one body. This was the thought that religion is for the individual, and that it ought to manifest itself in the outward life. While admitting what had been accomplished by the Reformation, they could not be satisfied with present achievements, but looked for a fuller realization of the principles of Protestantism in the individual. They felt that vital Christianity had reached the church only in the mass, and that the rich fruits of

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

spirituality, which must be sought largely in the individual, the church had not yet realized. Consequently they plead for greater personal purity and humility, and taught that religion is essentially a matter of the heart. Although in details they varied considerably, they held this one tenet in common, and collectively were known as Pietists.

With these people the early German Baptists, or *Taufers*, as they are constantly called in the early records, had much in common. These latter were one of the later sects to arise, and some of their leaders were on the most intimate terms of friendship with such leaders of Pietism as Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochenau, August Hermann Francke, Gottfried Arnold and others. At times the Brethren, or German Baptists, fraternized with the Pietists, but were never of them and were entirely free from any of those excesses to which some of the latter at times gave way. None of the leaders of the German Baptists had ever been Pietists, although they held more in common with them than with any of the other dissenting sects of the time, as the Schwenkfelders, the Mennonites, the Mystics and the like.

All of these sects, by their determination to live out the teachings of the New Testament as they understood them, brought down upon their defenseless heads the full wrath of both Church and State. The three state churches—Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran—denied the right of any of the dissenting sects to exist in the German Empire. Consequently every means at their command was used to free the land

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

from these heretics and heresies. The sufferings they endured were terrible. They gave their lives by the thousands for the religion they loved. Deaths at the stake, by drowning or strangulation were almost daily occurrences. The awful story of suffering endured by these innocent people for conscience' sake makes one of the darkest pages in modern history.

But even the bloody hand of persecution could not silence these heroic men. Imprisonments, scourgings and threats of death did not quench their ardor. They went about the country, preaching, protesting against unjust interference with natural rights on the part of church and state, and everywhere exhorting sinners to repentance. One of the greatest of these was Ernst Christoph Hochmann, who represented the best element of Pietism. He exercised great influence upon Alexander Mack, who was to become the first leader of the German Baptist Brethren. They traveled together over many parts of Germany, holding evangelistic meetings, song and prayer services, in which they strove to give the Word of God in all its purity to the people. Both were powerful preachers, men of wealth and culture, whose powers had been developed and matured by good education and varied experiences. They were in perfect accord and sympathy. They preached the same doctrine—the principles which afterwards Mack at least practiced. Hochmann had been bred a Lutheran and Mack a Reformed, or Presbyterian, but both had ceased to be in accord with their mother churches and strove for a fuller life of the spirit.

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

In 1702, Hochmann was imprisoned in the castle at Detmold by Count zur Lippe-Detmold for over-free statements about the state churches. As a condition to regaining his liberty he wrote out his confession of faith, which may be taken as a statement of the principles held in common by himself and Mack. This document, next to the Bible, was the most important influence that led to the organization of the German Baptist or Dunker church. Because of its importance and direct bearing upon our early history, I have translated the article entire, and will here insert it for the benefit of the reader.<sup>1</sup>

### *Copy of a Pietistic Confession of Faith.*

After it had been announced to me yesterday evening that his Gracious Lordship had assented to my dismissal, on condition that I beforehand would give a short confession of my faith, I have herewith prepared such (an article) very briefly as follows:

1. I believe one eternal, only, allpowerful, every-where-present God, as he has revealed himself in the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in the New Volume, however, as the Father, Son and Spirit, Matt. 28, v. 19, and I do not find it in my soul necessary to dispute or criticise much about it: but I regard it better to submit one's self humbly to this eternal Godly Being in the Father, Son, and Spirit and to experience his inner workings, as the Father reveals the Son inwardly and the Son again the Father, and this through the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, with-

---

<sup>1</sup> From a copy in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

out which nothing can be known in divine things, and this is also alone the eternal life, that one should know aright this one God as Christ says, John xvii. 3, and that I may explain myself briefly in regard to this, I profess to the ancient Ausselic Creed, Credo in Deum, etc.

2. In regard to baptism, I believe that Christ instituted it alone for the grown up and not for the little children, because one can not find in the entire holy Scripture one iota of an express command about it; for arguments and good opinions will not be sufficient on these points, but there must be express commands spoken by God or Christ, as there is an express command about the circumcision of Israelitish children.

3. In regard to the Lord's Supper, I believe that it was instituted only for the chosen disciples of Christ, who, by renunciation of all worldly things, follow Christ Jesus in deed and truth; and that the covenant of God will be much reviled and his anger inflamed over the whole community, if the godless children of the world are admitted to the love feast of the Lord, as is done alas! at the present time.

4. Concerning the full coming of the Spirit, I believe that, although I have been conceived and born of sinful seed, I may still be sanctified through Jesus Christ, not only justly but also completely, so that no more sin shall remain in me when I shall have come to full stature in Christ. But I do not yet boast that I have attained perfection, but I acknowledge with Paul that I will try to attain it with all earnestness and zeal and will consecrate myself to God and the Lamb for his complete service; but that one can become perfect is to be proven from the Holy Scripture on all pages: I cite however this time only this one very significant

## **Genesis of the Brethren Church**

proverb, Heb. vii. 25, according to the Piscator version. He can therefore also make perfectly blessed those who come to God through him, who is ever living to intercede for them. It is surely not enough that a great redemption should be made for me through Christ, but this redemption from sin, death, devil and hell must be made within the soul by the son of the living God and his precious mediatorial office, so that not only the prophetic and high-priestly but also that which is kingly must powerfully manifest itself in the soul, even to the attainment of the perfect likeness of God, and Christ must take within us a spiritual form, and if this does not take place actively in the soul through Christ during life, one can not attain to the contemplation of God after death, for without sanctification no one will see God; for whoever has this hope—to attain to the contemplation of God—he must purify himself, as he also is pure. 1 John iii. 3.

5. Concerning the office of the Spirit I believe that Christ, who is the head of the church, alone can appoint teachers and preachers and give them the qualifications therefor; and no being except the Christ, risen above all heavens and fulfilling everything, has appointed some apostles, some however, evangelists, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, so that the saints may be prepared for the work of the ministry. Ephesians iv. 10, 11, Acts xx. 28, state expressly that the Holy Ghost (N. B. and not man) had appointed them bishops to pasture the congregation of God, which he had purchased with his own blood.

6. Concerning authority I believe that there is in the kingdom of nature a divine order, to which I also gladly submit in all civil matters according to the teaching of Paul, Rom. xiii. 1, 7. On the

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

other hand, however, to those that strive against God's Word and my conscience, or the freedom of Christ, I grant no power; for it is said: We ought to obey God, etc., Acts v. 29, and if anything should be charged against God and my conscience I should rather suffer unjust force, than act contrary to this and I pray that God may not reckon it against those magistrates, but may convert them; but this I declare further, that the essential political power is in no sense a Christ; for the Turk at Constantinople and the Pope at Rome are true magistrates in the realm of nature, but they are not for this reason Christians; for where a magistrate shall receive from me the very venerable title of Christian, I must perceive in him that he has the spirit of Christ, or else I say with Saint Paul, Rom. viii. 9, who has not the spirit of Christ is not his and therefore not a Christian power; but I consider and regard them as heathen powers, which however will soon have reached their time, because I have been infallibly convinced out of God's Word that the glorious Christ sitting at the Father's right hand will soon break in and thrust all the heathen powers from their seats, and according to the prophecy of Holy Mary will raise the lowly, for the scepter of Christ will destroy and break to pieces all other animal kingdoms, Dan, ii. 44. Indeed the Lamb will overthrow the beast and its horns, as is stated distinctly in Apoc. xvii. 14. These will strive with the Lamb and the Lamb will overthrow them, for he is the Lord of all lords and the King of all kings, and with the called and chosen and the believers; and because the kingdom of Christ is now so near at hand, I confess that I, as a spiritual statistician, have learned from God's Word to reflect more upon the rising sun of justice than upon the high powers of the world

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

soon to depart; for that will last into the eternity of eternities, but these will soon have reached their limit by the great impending judgments of God.

7. Finally, what pertains to the redemption of damned men, I do not see how this is the place to carry it out, because it requires a very detailed deduction if it is to be distinctly and clearly understood; only this will I add briefly, that as in Adam all men have fallen, so also must all men be born again through the other Adam, Jesus Christ; if this were not so it would necessarily follow that Christ were not powerful enough to restore the human race which was lost through Adam and in this connection the chapter to the Romans can be read and from this may be seen how the restoration in the mediatorship of Christ has been much stronger and more mighty than the fall of sin in Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 22 states explicitly: As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but, as has been said, this matter can not possibly be carried out in accordance with its importance, but it requires a word-of-mouth deliverance, if all the objections and doubts pertaining to it are to be explained from God's Word; and because these are the most important points which are at the present day questions of controversy, I have desired to draw them up briefly herewith, and have to hand them over to a high magistrate of the land with the added hearty wish that God the Almighty may powerfully light them up with his light from above; and since I perhaps may have no opportunity to appear before the high authority of this land; I therefore give herewith my due, humble thanks to God the Almighty and also to my most gracious master for everything good which I have enjoyed during my stay here. May God who is rich in mercy reward everything good done me, in time and eterni-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ty; and may he soon allow the earnest pleadings and prayers for the master of this house, for his wife and the whole household to be fulfilled, so that every curse may be turned away and that on the other hand the spiritual blessings of God may be revealed therein. And although I may not be present in this land or house any more after this, I shall not leave off continuing my heartfelt prayers to God the Father of spirits of all flesh for the soul of the most beloved Frederick Adolph, and as long as I live I remain the most humble intercessor for the Count's whole house.

E. C. H. v. H.

In the Castle Detmold in the  
Month of November, 1702.

This confession of Hochmann's deserves consideration for several reasons. It will be observed that it was written six years before the organization of the German Baptist Church in 1708. There is no doubt that it represented the views held by Mack as fully as it does those of its author. In all essentials of doctrine they were perfectly agreed. Only in one instance is there evidence of a divergence of views, and this arose rather from expediency than from principle. In regard to the ordinance of baptism, Mack declared openly and unreservedly for immersion; Hochmann would have been satisfied with pouring. Both required the three-fold act. Hochmann's preference for pouring was as a matter of expediency, to avoid a fixed form, for it was because of formalism that he had been so long and so mercilessly persecuted. He later wrote, "I have no objection if any man for the sake of con-

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

science wants to be completely immersed." In methods of work these two men frequently disagreed, and it was this, as we shall see, that separated them when the church of the Brethren was organized.

To indicate further the importance of this tract and its influence in the early history of the church, let us step forward eleven years from its composition. This was in 1713, five years after the organization at Schwarzenau. The infant church was prospering: the pious and holy lives of the first members were attracting others into the fold. Among these was a large number of Pietists and Separatists who desired to be admitted into church fellowship without being required to observe the ordinances of the church. Mack at once set about to prepare a manual of the principles and usages of the church, which he entitled, "A Brief and simple Exposition of the Outward but still Sacred Rites and Ordinances of the House of God."

This little book has been exceedingly popular all through the two hundred years of the church's history, and has been extensively circulated and read. Christopher Sower printed it in 1774, an English edition was printed in Philadelphia in 1810, and recently, in 1888, the Brethren Publishing House, now at Elgin, Illinois, brought out a large edition. Many persons who read this will have copies of this last edition and will doubtless take interest in tracing the parallels between Mack's work and the Confession of Hochmann, as given above. Mack's Rites and Ordinances is simply giving expression in another way and with con-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

siderable expansion and elaboration to what Hochmann had expressed in outline. Not that it is in any sense a repetition of the other, however, as I take it; except in so far as men holding similar views must necessarily reflect each other in giving expression to them. The similarity was, without doubt, unnoticed by the writer.

What invests Hochmann's Confession with especial interest is the fact of its priority. It is, in point of time, the first work in existence to express in concise form the leading facts of the Dunker faith. The probability that Hochmann, late in life, was baptized by Alexander Mack and thus became a member of the Brethren church adds an additional feature of interest. If this is so, the Confession may be regarded as the first piece of literary work of this fraternity.

The evidence in regard to Hochmann's membership is not quite conclusive, however. It is known that he worshiped with the Brethren on numerous occasions. As he lived in Schwarzenau from before the organization of the church in 1708 till his death in 1721, he was in constant association with the members of the Schwarzenau congregation. The evidence in regard to his membership is as follows:

1. He was in full accord with the doctrines and beliefs of the church.
2. He was currently reported to have been baptized at Schwarzenau by Alexander Mack.
3. He worshiped frequently with the Brethren at Schwarzenau.

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

4. Goebel says of him that he "upheld the hand of brotherly love with the Taufers."

5. He preached on a certain occasion at one of the meetings of the German Baptists in Switzerland, when Alexander Mack was present.

6. Alexander Mack, Jr.<sup>1</sup> late in life, in making a list of important people that he had known, names "Brother Hochmann von Hochenau." In this list Mack does not call any one "Brother" who was not a member of the German Baptist church, unless Hochmann be the exception; and the list includes about two hundred names.

7. Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh, in his History of the Brethren, includes his name in a list of 255 persons who joined the church in Europe.

Whether he was a member of the church of the Brethren or not we may never know positively; the probabilities are that he was. He was not of the leaders, however, and if he joined it was late in life, when his years of activity and greatest usefulness had been largely spent. At all events his thinking has left a deep impress upon our history, and his association with Alexander Mack was an important factor in the genesis of the church.

The frequent heart to heart talks by these two godly men about the religious condition of the time, their prolonged conferences in regard to the ordinances and how they should be observed, and their studious searching of the Scriptures after God's will in all things as therein revealed,—these things gave the first

---

<sup>1</sup> Brumbaugh's History of the Brethren, page 25.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

draft, so to speak, of the religious principles to be taken as a standard by the new congregation.

The religious position of both these stalwart men, however, was unsatisfactory. They could not find fellowship in any of the established churches, and to remain simply Separatists was to be deprived of the ordinances of God's house and of the means of spiritual growth afforded thereby. Hochmann's mystical tendencies enabled him to halt here, but Mack's greater resoluteness would not let him be satisfied with anything short of an organization in which he could practice the rites and ordinances of the New Testament as he understood them. And this brings me now to the interesting story of the organization of the German Baptist Brethren, or Dunker church.

This memorable event took place in the year 1708. After prolonged searching of the Scriptures and many prayers, eight pious souls covenanted together to organize themselves into a body for the purpose of observing the ordinances of God's house. Their natural leader was Alexander Mack, who had been a noted evangelist before this, and who was chosen as the first minister of the new organization. As their study and research had convinced them that trine immersion was the baptism taught in the New Testament, their first duty was the administration of this rite, which they desired their leader to perform. This he declined to do as he had not been immersed himself. He therefore required to be immersed before administering the rite to others. Accordingly they betook themselves to fasting and prayer for divine guidance, after which they

## **Genesis of the Brethren Church**

cast lots to determine which of the other four men should administer this rite to him. This done, the company of eight silently wended their way down to the river Eder, that winds its meandering course through the little village of Schwarzenau. Here on the green bank, early in the morning, prayers were made, and then he upon whom the lot had fallen led the pious Mack into the water and immersed him three times face forward; after which he in turn administered the same rite to each of the remaining seven. Thus was organized the German Baptist Brethren church, by the ordinance of baptism as practiced in the time of the apostles.

The eight persons forming this organization were Alexander Mack of Schriesheim, in the Palatinate; George Grebi, from Hesse Cassel; Lucas Vetter, from Hessenland; Andreas Bone of Basle, in Switzerland; Johannes Kipping of Bariet, in Wurtemburg; Anna Margaretha Mack, (wife of Alexander Mack); Johanna Nothigerin Bonisin, (wife of Andreas Bone); and Johanna Kippinger. These are the original forms of the names. For the convenience of all I give the names also in the Anglicised form.

Alexander Mack.	George Greby.
Anna Margarite Mack.	Luke Vetter.
Joanna Noetingen Bony.	John Kipping.
Andrew Bony.	Joanna Kipping.

These were not a group of religious enthusiasts, nor were they led to take this step without careful and prayerful consideration. Every inch of the ground they occupied they had carefully fortified by the testi-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

mony of history and of the Inspired Word. In no sense were they extremists, unless it was in the extreme heroism of their action and aim—that of re-establishing the apostolic mode of worship after a lapse of a thousand years.

Fortunately we have an account of this most interesting transaction from the pen of one who received his material at first hand. Five years after this memorable beginning, Alexander Mack had occasion to put in written form, as we have seen, the principles of the doctrine he had espoused. This little book, "The Rites and Ordinances," after its first appearance in Schwarzenau in 1713, was not reissued either in Europe or America until Christopher Sower brought out his German edition of 1774. To this edition Alexander Mack, Jr., prefaced an account of the organization as he had received it from his father. The English edition that appeared in Philadelphia in 1810 was a rather free translation of the Sower print. I quote from the German edition of 1774.<sup>1</sup>

It pleased the good and merciful God near the beginning of the present century to prosper his saving grace, which has appeared to all men, by many warning voices calling them to repent; and he thereby awaked many from the death and sleep of sin, who, looking about them for a righteous observance of Christianity, as it is in Christ, were compelled to see with sorrowful eyes its great decay in almost every place.

Under these conditions they uttered many faithful

---

<sup>1</sup> Copy in the Bridgewater College library.

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

testimonies of the truth, and established here and there private meetings in addition to the common church organizations, in which the newly-awaked souls sought instruction. As a result of this, however, the envious priesthood embittered the hearts of the rulers, so that persecutions were begun at different places, namely in Switzerland, in Wurtemburg, in the Palatinate, and at other places. To these persecuted exiles the Lord now pointed out a place of refuge, or a little village, in Wittgenstein where, at that time a mildly disposed count was ruling, and where several awakened countesses also dwelled.

There was liberty of conscience granted at Schwarzenau, which is scarcely an hour's journey from Berleburg. From this cause, although Wittgenstein is a poor and rough country, yet many of the various kinds of people came together at Schwarzenau, and this place, which formerly had been but little regarded, was now suddenly changed into an entirely different estate, so that in a few years it became a place celebrated far and wide. However, those who came together there because of the persecutions, although they were distinguished by different opinions, and also different in manners and customs, yet they were at first all called Pietists, and among themselves they called each other Brethren.

But very soon it appeared that the words of Christ, Matthew 18, where he says: "But if thy brother trespass correct him between thyself and him alone," etc., could not be reduced to a proper Christian practice, because there was no established Christian community.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Therefore some went back again to the religious denominations from which they had come, because they could not subject themselves to a stricter Christian discipline. To many the spirit of liberty seemed entirely too great, and appeared to be more dangerous even than the religious organizations which they had left.

Then some felt themselves powerfully drawn to search out the footsteps of the early Christians, and desired heartily to receive in faith the testimonies commanded by Jesus Christ according to their true worth. At the same time it was revealed to them strongly from within how important the obedience of faith is to a soul that desires to be saved. And this revelation led them at once to the mystery of water baptism, which appeared to them as a door into the church, the thing for which they were so earnestly seeking. In regard to baptism, however, this was spoken of among the Pietists in very different ways, and this fact very many times brought grief to the souls of those that loved the truth.

This state of things continued until the year 1708, when eight persons agreed with one another to enter into a covenant of a good conscience with God, in order to take up all the commandments of Jesus Christ as an easy yoke, and thus to follow the Lord Jesus, their good and faithful shepherd, in joy and sorrow, as his true sheep, to a blessed end.

These eight persons were as follows; namely, five brethren and three sisters. The five brethren were George Grebi, of Hesse Cassel, the first; Lucas Vetter, likewise of Hessia, the second; the third was Alex-

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

ander Mack, from the Palatinate of Schreisheim, between Mannheim and Heidelberg; the fourth was Andreas Bony, of Basle, in Switzerland; the fifth, John Kipping, of Bareit, in Wurtemburg. The three sisters were Joanna Noethiger, or Bony, the first; Anna Margaretha Mack, the second; and Joanna Kipping, the third. These eight persons bound themselves together as brethren and sisters unto the covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ as a church of Christian believers. And when they had found in authentic histories that the early Christians, in the first and second centuries, had been planted into the death of the crucified Christ by a three-fold immersion into the watery bath of holy baptism, according to the command of Christ, they then sought industriously in the New Testament, and found everything in it perfectly harmonizing with this early practice. Thereupon they were possessed of a longing desire to use this means practiced and commanded by Christ himself, believing that according to his righteous command, it became them to fulfill all righteousness.

And now the question arose as to who should administer the rite externally unto them. One of their number, who was a leader in expounding the Word in their meetings, had visited in sincere love different congregations of those who believed in immersion (Taufs-gesinnten) in various parts of Germany, the most of whom admitted that immersion in water was indeed right, when employed out of love to Christ; but they would also eagerly maintain that the pouring

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

of a handful of cold water could likewise be sufficient, provided that everything else were all right.

Such teaching, however, gave no satisfaction to their consciences. Therefore they requested of him who was their leader in expounding the Word, to be immersed on their faith, according to the example of the earliest and best Christians. But he, regarding himself as one who had not been baptized, requested to be baptized first by one of them, before he should administer the rite to another. Therefore they decided to unite in fasting and prayer, in order to obtain from Christ himself, the founder of his holy ordinances, safe direction in this matter, for he (who had been requested to baptize the others) wished to be baptized by the church of Christ, and the others had the same desire.

In this difficulty they were strengthened by the words of Christ, who had so truthfully said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." With such confidence in the precious and sure promises of God, they cast lots, amidst fasting and prayer, to determine which of the four brethren should baptize the brother who so earnestly desired to be baptized by the church of Christ. They pledged their word to one another, however, that no one should ever reveal who had been the first among them to administer the rite, so that no one should ever take occasion to call them by the name of any man, because they had already found such foolishness reproved by Paul (in his writings) to the Corinthians.

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

As they were now prepared, the solitary eight went out in the loneliness of the morning to the stream called the Eder, and the brother upon whom the lot had fallen, baptized first the brother who wished to be baptized by the church of Christ. When he was baptized, he baptized him by whom he had been baptized, and the remaining three brethren and sisters. Thus were the eight all baptized at an early hour of the morning.

After they had all come up out of the water and had changed their garments, they were at the same time moved inwardly with great joyfulness, and by grace were deeply impressed with these significant words: "Be ye fruitful and multiply." This took place in the year above mentioned, 1708. But of the month of the year, or the day of the month or week, they have left us no indication.

After this the above mentioned eight persons were more and more powerfully strengthened in their obedience to the faith they had adopted, and they were encouraged in their meetings to bear testimony publicly to the truth. Whereupon the Lord granted them his special grace, so that still more became obedient to the faith. Thus within the space of seven years, namely by the year 1715, not only was there a large church at Schwarzenau, but also here and there in the Palatinate were found lovers of the truth. This was especially the case at Marienborn, where a church had assembled; for when a body of members in the Palatinate wished to organize, they were persecuted; then they would go to Marienborn. When the church there became large, it was also persecuted. Then those who

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

had been persecuted collected at Creyfelt, under the king of Prussia; here they found freedom.

Within these seven years it pleased God to awaken many laborers among them and send them into his vineyard, among whom were John Henry Kalkloser of Frankenthal, Christian Libe and Abraham Duboy of Ebstein, John Naas and others of the North, Peter Becker of Dilsheim, and to these associated themselves also John Henry Traut and his brothers, Henry Holtzapple and Stephen Koch. The most of these came in these seven years to Creyfelt. John Henry Kalkloser, however, and Abraham Duboy came to Schwarzenau, whither also came George Balser Gantz of Umstadt, and Michael Eckerling of Strasburg.

But as they found favor with God and men on the one hand, so on the other they found enemies of the truth, and persecutions arose here and there because of the Word. There were some who joyfully suffered being robbed of their goods, others had to endure bonds and prisons, some indeed for only a few weeks, but others for an indefinite number of years. Christian Libe was chained on board the galley for a number of years among the evildoers, and was compelled to work the oars. But by God's providence, they have all been delivered from these difficulties with a clear conscience.

This is enough of the record to give us a clear understanding of this very important transaction. The rest tells of the growth of the church and of the persecutions that followed. Heroic men and women they were that formed this first nucleus of the organiza-

## **Genesis of the Brethren Church**

tion—men and women who were willing to stake their all on what they believed to be right. They were not acting from caprice or following an impulse of excitement when they took this all-important step; neither had they led sinful lives and were suddenly converted. They had all been members of churches before 1708, and were driven to this act by quickened consciences because they could find no organization that taught and practiced the divine ordinances as given in the New Testament. Mack, Greby, Bony, and Vetter had been members of the Reformed church; Kipping was a Lutheran. Following the principles of Erasmus in the days of Luther, they had sought to correct the abuses from within the church, but at length gave up the effort as impossible. So the only thing left them was to form a new organization based upon the principles of the New Testament as careful study and divine guidance had interpreted them to them. This they proceeded to do in the manner that we have seen.

After the organization the church was wonderfully blessed of God. The membership increased rapidly, and branch congregations were established at various places. In a few years there were organized churches, in addition to the mother church at Schwarzenau, in Marienborn, Epstein, Creyfelt, Surestervain, and in several parts of Switzerland and Holland. It is not possible to follow those congregations in detail, however, as persecutions constantly drove the members from one place to another, so that the same persons are frequently found in several congregations near the same time.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

At times whole congregations were driven out and went almost bodily to a new location. This was the case in 1715 when the church at Marienborn fled for protection to Creyfelt. Again in 1720 the Schwarzenau congregation found life intolerable in their original church home and the whole body of members escaped into West Friesland. Generally, however, the persecutions in the new position were no less severe than those from which they had fled. In 1714 certain members of a Reformed congregation near Creyfelt became dissatisfied with the practices of the church as regards the mode of baptism, and also as to the validity of infant baptism. As a result they applied to the Taufers at Creyfelt for membership and were received into the church by trine immersion. This led to great confusion. The synods of the state churches made loud protestations. The civil government took the matter in hand and summoned the six persons before the court to answer for their actions. The judge was a Catholic, and the six persons were condemned and thrown into prison at Düsseldorf. They were sentenced to hard labor, and for four long years they suffered all kinds of privations and hardships for conscience' sake. This is but one of the numerous instances that might be cited of the persecution and unjust treatment they constantly endured.

That these persecutions were in no sense deserved, but sprang from prejudice and spiritual blindness is attested by a state document of the time. The governor of the Schwarzenau district in 1720, in preparing his official report to the Imperial Treasurer

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

took occasion to observe that "for a while pious people have been living here, of whom we never heard anything evil. They kept themselves very quiet and retired and no man ever made any complaint of them. Lately forty families of them, about 200 persons, have moved out of the country."<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed that this was written the very year in which the church fled from Schwarzenau to West Friesland. This shows how prejudice controlled the actions even of generous minded rulers and allowed persecutions to be inflicted on innocent people with whom they found no fault and whose conduct was above reproach.

The number of members in Europe will never be known. That they were numerous is certain. The largest list yet made contains only two hundred and fifty-five names;<sup>2</sup> but it is evident that this is but a fraction of the whole number.

To live out consistently in Germany the principles of the German Baptists during the first half of the eighteenth century was nearly if not altogether impossible. The persecution that the members had to endure operated in one or the other of two directions: it either drove them out of Europe or persecuted them back into their former ways, or, it may be added, into infidelity.

Amidst their hardships it is not remarkable that they looked with longing eyes towards America; and it was here that they first found that spiritual freedom

---

<sup>1</sup> Goebel's *Geschichte des Christlichen Lebens*.

<sup>2</sup> Brumbaugh's *History of the Brethren*.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

which their souls so much longed for. The first group came in 1719. They were a part of the Greyfelt congregation, consisting of about twenty families. Peter Becker was their leader. He was a minister in Germany and became the first elder among the Brethren in the New World. He was not a great preacher but was a man of deep piety, and a gifted singer.

The voyage is said to have been a stormy one, but definite information in regard to it is almost entirely wanting. They landed at Philadelphia and then moved on to Germantown, a place with which they, as a people, have been inseparably connected from that time to the present. Here the first congregation in America was organized. Here was erected the first church building among the Brethren in the New World.<sup>1</sup> It is still used as a Brethren church and is in good repair. Here was the first great printing establishment (the Sower press), and the first centre of missionary and literary activity among them. This was the first centre, and from here they moved out to form other settlements. Very soon some of them had located in the Skippack valley, at Falckner's Swamp, and at Oley.

Ten years after this first group had established themselves in Pennsylvania, the original Schwarzenau congregation, which had fled to West Friesland in 1720 to escape persecution, decided to cast their lot with their brethren in the New World. This was the mother church, and Alexander Mack had been their pastor and leader all the while. As we have seen, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Built in 1770.

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

entire congregation fled with him from Schwarzenau to Friesland. Now in their last effort to find spiritual freedom their ranks still remained unbroken. The entire congregation came, consisting of fifty-nine families, one hundred and twenty-six souls in all.

They sailed from Rotterdam July 7, 1729, in the ship *Allen*, under the command of James Craigie. They touched at Cowes, and after a stormy voyage of seventy-one days landed at Philadelphia, Sept. 15. Here they took the oath of allegiance to King George II. and became British subjects.

Mack and his company were received at Germantown with great rejoicing. The church there was strengthened and encouraged as never before. The newcomers found at last a home of rest from their wanderings and persecutions, and were happy in the associations of their brethren. Bishop Mack at once assumed the leadership and direction of the church at Germantown, over which he presided with great wisdom and skill until his death in 1735.

After the emigration of the Schwarzenau congregation from West Friesland to Germantown in 1729, the chief centre of the German Baptists in Europe was at Creyfelt. Here Elder John Naas had been the leader and had built up a strong church but now Elder Christian Libe was in charge. The members were continually harassed by persecutions and oppressions, so that the church did not increase. In fact ever since the departure of that first group for America in 1719, under Peter Becker, their strength had gradually declined.

In 1733 Elder Naas with a small group of members

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

also came to America. He was the last really strong leader in Europe, and after his departure the work there gradually dwindled away. Christian Libe, the only elder now remaining in Europe, was not cast in the heroic mold. He found the persecutions greater than he could endure. He lost interest in the work of the church, gave up the struggle to live a godly life, and became a wine merchant. The members gradually fell away or died so that in twenty-five years after the church had been established, organized effort in Europe was at an end.

Thanks be to God, however, in the meantime it had been firmly planted on American soil. The Germantown congregation was organized in 1723 on Christmas day. The year following, two other congregations were established; one at Coventry in September, and another on the Conestoga in November. Peter Becker, the elder in charge at Germantown, was the first minister to both. In 1729 the White Oak congregation was organized in Lancaster county. In 1732 Peter Becker preached at Oley, baptized several members and organized them into a congregation. The next year Elder John Naas organized a church at Amwell in New Jersey and another at Great Swamp, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania.

So within fourteen years from the arrival of the first company under Peter Becker, the Brethren church had been firmly established in several counties of Pennsylvania and in New Jersey. From these centres it has spread west and south until churches have been established in most of the states of the Union.

## **Genesis of the Brethren Church**

It is not the purpose of this sketch to trace these people further than to their establishment in the United States. How this was done we have now seen. I cannot close this chapter, however, without a statement of the principles of the church whose literary work we are now to investigate.

The German Baptist Brethren hold a unique place in history. They are Protestants in the fullest sense of the term. As the Protestants were originally those that protested against the oppression and corruptions of the Catholic church, in the sixteenth century, and separated themselves from their communion, so the German Baptists were those who protested against the oppression, errors, and lack of spirituality in the established Protestant churches of the early eighteenth century. As they could not reconcile the intolerance of the churches with the spirit of Christ, or many of her practices with the teachings of Christ, they were consequently without a church home.

On the other hand they could not go full lengths with the Pietists, or Quakers, as they were later called in England, and make Christianity wholly a matter of the spirit. So far as the spirituality of worship is concerned they were at one with the Pietists, but they felt that this in itself was not sufficient. Their study of the Bible had taught them that the ordinances of the New Testament were given for the followers of Christ to observe. And they felt it incumbent upon them as humble followers of the Master to obey him implicitly in all things.

So the only course left for them was to organize

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

a church in which piety and spirituality might have free course, and yet in which they could practice all the rites and ordinances taught in the New Testament. These then were the two cardinal principles that led to the organization of the Brethren church: spirituality in worship and the observance of all the ordinances of the New Testament.

They refused to form a creed, lest they should omit something essential, a fact for which they were once commended by Benjamin Franklin. But they adopted the New Testament as their creed, and try to follow its teachings in all things. They interpret the Scriptures literally, except where a figurative interpretation is obviously intended. While exercising charity towards all and antagonizing none, they believe that the Bible means just what it says, and that it is the duty of Christian people to obey its teachings in word as well as in spirit. They practice the literal form of the different ordinances at the same time that they seek to obtain the spiritual blessing from their observance.

Elder D. L. Miller, editor of *The Gospel Messenger* and author of some half-dozen books of travel and experience in Bible lands, has written a tract setting forth the principles and doctrines of the church in a concise form. From this I will make some extracts which, I am sure, will be welcome to the reader, and will form a fitting conclusion to this chapter.

### *Faith and Practice.*

The Brethren hold the Bible to be the inspired and infallible Word of God, and accept the New Testa-

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

ment as their rule of faith and practice. In the subtleties of speculative theology the church takes but little interest. She is chiefly concerned in giving willing and cheerful obedience to the plain, simple commandments of Christ Jesus. The Brethren are, in every respect, evangelical in their faith. They believe in the Trinity, in the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and in future rewards and punishments. Faith, repentance and baptism are held to be conditions of salvation. These three constitute evangelical conversion, and upon them rests the promise of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

### *Baptism.*

Baptism is administered by trine immersion. After being instructed in the principles of the Gospel, and having faithfully promised to observe the same, the applicant is taken down into the water, and, kneeling, reaffirms his faith in Christ and promises to live faithful until death. He is then baptized for the remission of his sins, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; the administrator immersing the applicant face forward at the mention of each name in the Trinity. The administrator then lays his hands on the head of the kneeling candidate and offers a brief prayer in behalf of the one baptized, and he arises to be greeted as a brother, with the right hand of fellowship and the kiss of love, to walk in newness of life.

The Brethren follow closely the practice of the apostolic church, and admit none into fellowship until

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

they have been baptized. In the language of Peter to the Pentecostians they tell all believers to "repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38. Holding that baptism is only for believers, and those who have repented, they oppose infant baptism. Infants can neither believe nor repent, hence they are not proper subjects for baptism. Christ having sufficiently atoned for them, all children who die before coming to a knowledge of good and evil will be saved.

In defense of trine immersion they hold that the great commission, given by Christ, and recorded in Matt. 28: 19, Revised Version, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," teaches a threefold action. As there are three persons in the Trinity, each one of the Divine Three is honored in this form of baptism. As the three Persons constitute one God, and a belief in each of these one faith, so the three dippings constitute one baptism. In favor of their practice they have the testimony of all Greek scholars, who have examined the subject, the practice of the entire Greek church, and reliable history. These all show that trine immersion was the almost universal mode of baptism for centuries succeeding the apostolic age. Changes were gradually made from trine immersion to sprinkling, but the church that made the change, the Roman Catholic, still retains the three actions in applying water to the candidate. Nearly all the Protestant churches that practice sprinkling retain the same form, thus testify-

## Genesis of the Brethren Church

ing to the truth that the commission teaches a three-fold action in baptism. Their baptism is accepted as valid by all religious denominations of any note whatever.

### *The Agape, or Feast of Love.*

The evening before his death, our Blessed Master, after having washed his disciples' feet, ate a supper with them and instituted, in connection with this sacred meal, the Communion,—the bread and cup. The apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, followed the example of their Great Leader and introduced the agape into the apostolic church. This feast of love, of which all the Christians partook, was a full meal, was eaten in the evening, and is called by the apostle Paul the Lord's Supper. The Communion of the bread and wine was given in connection with this meal. The love-feast was kept up in the primitive church for four centuries, but as the church grew in numbers and wealth, it lost its first love and spirit of fraternity, and the feasts of love were discontinued. The Brethren, in their reformatory movement in 1708 restored these love-feasts, and in this particular still follow the example of Christ and the practice of the apostles and primitive Christians, and keep the feast of love. A full meal is prepared and placed upon the table, used for that purpose, in the church, and all the members partake of the supper.

### *Feet-Washing.*

Before eating supper, the religious rite of washing feet is observed. Their authority for this practice is

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

found in John 13: 1-17, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . . If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." The Brethren do not stand alone in the practice of this rite. The Greek church, with ninety million communicants, has adhered to feet-washing, as she claims, ever since the days of the apostles, and the patriarch of Jerusalem engages in feet-washing to-day near the spot where Jesus himself gave the example and the precept.

In their practice of the ordinance of feet-washing at love-feast occasions the Brethren follow very closely the example of the Master. Water is poured into a basin, a brother girds himself with a towel and washes and wipes his brother's bared feet, and in turn has his feet washed. The rite is in this way performed over the entire congregation. The sisters wash the sisters' feet and all the proprieties of the sexes are most rigidly observed. By this ordinance the gospel principle of humility is set forth and by its observance all are placed on a common level. The rich and poor stand alike together in the great Brotherhood established by Christ.

### *The Supper.*

After observing the ceremony of feet-washing, a blessing is asked upon the simple meal spread on the

## **Genesis of the Brethren Church**

tables, and it is eaten with solemnity. It is held to be typical of the great supper at the end of the world, when Christ himself will be master of ceremonies. The important lesson is taught that we are all children of one common family, members of one common brotherhood, having one common purpose in view, and the bond of fraternity and loving fellowship is shown by eating together this sacred meal as did Christ and his disciples and as did the primitive Christians. At the conclusion of the meal thanks are returned and then as the members are seated around the table, the right hand of fellowship and the kiss of charity are given. The salutation of the kiss of love in worship and in customary greetings, as enjoined by the apostles, is never observed between the sexes.

### *The Communion.*

The Communion is then administered. This consists in partaking of the bread and wine in commemoration of the sufferings and death of our adorable Redeemer. In the Lord's Supper we are pointed forward to the evening of the world, to the great reunion of the saints. In the Communion we are pointed back to the cross. The emblems are passed from hand to hand by the brethren, while the officiating minister breaks the bread and passes the cup to the sisters. After this a season of earnest devotion follows, and then a hymn is sung and the services are closed for the evening. Love-feasts are held in each congregation usually once or twice each year, but as the mem-

## **Literary Activity of the Brethren**

bers visit from congregation to congregation, during the love-feast season, they engage many times in this service during the year.

## CHAPTER II.

### CHRISTOPHER SOWER ESTABLISHES A PRINTING PRESS AT GERMANTOWN.

The secluded region of the Conestoga Valley, in the depths of the Pennsylvania forests, was, in the early years of the eighteenth century, well on the frontier of American civilization. Here in the spring of 1726 came a modest German immigrant to start life on the wilds of the American frontier. He was accompanied by his wife and five-year-old son, and sought to establish a home in one of the fertile valleys under the dominion of the mild and peace-loving Penn. He was scarcely more than an adventurer, having before tried two or three occupations with indifferent success. Now he was going to turn his attention to farming in the valley of the Conestoga.

Accordingly he bought of one, Simon König, a little farm of fifty acres, lying in a long strip on both sides of Mill Creek, in what is now Leacock township in Lancaster county. Here he built for his habitation an humble dwelling, and began the life of a frontiersman. Naturally there were many hardships and privations to endure. But he soon settled into the routine of agricultural pursuits with every prospect of ending his days as an humble tiller of the soil. Little would any one have thought at this time that this unpretentious small farmer should come to be a leader in shap-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ing the political and religious thought of his day; yet such was the unsuspected blessing that Providence had in store for him. This obscure person was no other than Christopher Sower, who became the first German printer in America, "and through his press wielded an influence among the Sectarians in the Province greater than that of any other person or organization."

To Christopher Sower belongs the honor of having transplanted German culture and German printing into the New World. In book-making he was the first to use German type, and he edited and printed the first German newspaper in America. Andrew Bradford and Benjamin Franklin each did German printing in Philadelphia a few years before Sower set up his press in Germantown, but they used the Roman type and never reached a large constituency. Sower threw himself body and soul into his enterprise, and issued books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, almanacs in great profusion. Not only was his press a prolific one, but the output was governed by an almost faultless judgment as to what was best for the German inhabitants of the New World. He was actuated by the high purpose of providing the most useful reading matter for his fellow countrymen in their new environments. He undertook projects for their good that seemed doomed to certain failure, yet by his indomitable energy and perseverance were carried to successful issues.

He was a man far in advance of his time. While boldly and fearlessly upholding the religious prin-

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

ples that he had espoused, he had the happy faculty of winning the confidence and admiration of the German immigrants everywhere, regardless of sect or creed. His interests and sympathies went out to all the new and trying conditions that beset his countrymen in their new environment. In his publications he sought to give such instruction in religion, politics, social and economic life as would lead to the greatest domestic happiness and the best citizenship. He far transcended the boundaries of sect or party, and soon found himself the acknowledged champion of whatever was best politically, socially, morally, religiously, for his countrymen.

In the complex web of what we call American civilization it is impossible to trace the different lines of influence that have gone out from the life and labors of this great and good man. In a thousand ways that we know not of his efforts modified and improved the conditions of his time, of which we today are enjoying the happy fruits. He shunned publicity, choosing rather to live in quiet and work in peace. Yet his silent influence started many a rill that has come down to us as a mighty flood of blessing, mingling beneficially with the higher elements of our American civilization. In the religious, political, educational, social and public life of his day he was a prominent figure, moving in easy familiarity and on equal footing with the leading statesmen and educators of his time. There was scarcely an important phase of life in his day that he did not touch, and to use Johnson's words in regard to Goldsmith, "Whatever he touched he adorned."

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

The career of this great man is full of interest and instruction, and in some parts seems more like fiction than fact. But as the present work is in no sense a biography, many of the most interesting events of his life must be passed over in silence, or referred to only incidentally, as they are related to his career as publisher. Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh has announced a forthcoming work on "The Life and Labors of the two Christopher Sowers," which will doubtless set forth his many-sided greatness in a deserving light. It is not the intention or desire of the present writer to infringe upon this field, but to confine himself to the restricted limits of his own line of investigation.

In this chapter I desire to tell the story of the erection and establishment of the Sower press, and explain, as far as possible, the mysteries and difficulties connected with doing this. In order to present this important transaction with even approximate clearness, it will be necessary to relate the leading facts in the early life of Christopher Sower, and see what manner of man it was that afterwards became such a power among the German inhabitants of the New World.

Christopher Sower was born at Laasphe, in Wittgenstein, in the province of Westphalia, Germany, in 1693. This was a time of great social and religious unrest. The formalism and want of spirituality in the state churches was roundly denounced by many awakened souls who longed and worked for a fuller spiritual life. Against these, on the other hand, the bloody hand of persecution was raised. Church and state joined in unholy alliance to crush out opposition

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

to the established order of things. Yet despite this fact, men on fire with holy zeal went everywhere proclaiming Christ, and denouncing the frigid ritualism with which their spirits were oppressed.

In this atmosphere of discussion and persecution, the early years of Sower were spent. He was early attracted to the Dissenters, and had warm friends among the Dunkers. At the time the Dunker Church was organized, in 1708, Christopher Sower was fifteen years of age, and it is probable that he knew personally all of the eight original members. At any rate he was on intimate terms a little later with such leaders as Alexander Mack, Peter Becker and others. When he joined the church is a matter not yet definitely settled.

As to his educational opportunities and attainments, there has been a good deal of conjecture and some wild guessing, but not much is known. He has been credited with a university education and with graduation from a medical college. But such statements unsupported by evidence, of course count for little; and the fact that the evidence has not been produced is a pretty clear indication that it does not exist. Sower's attainments in later life were such as to lend a shade of probability to these conjectures, but these attainments are better accounted for on other grounds.

From all that can be learned Christopher Sower sprang from humble parentage. He doubtless received such education as the schools of his native town provided. That he was well drilled in the rudiments of language and science is beyond question. But that he

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

acquired more than the rudiments in early life is highly improbable. Nowhere have I found in his writings the marks of scholarship. He was distinctly a self-made man. His approach to any subject is that of a practical man of affairs and not that of a scholar.

In early life he learned the trade of tailor, and it was doubtless this that he relied upon for a livelihood when he came to this country in the autumn of 1724. He settled in Germantown and in all probability pursued his trade. In this way he passed the following two winters and the intervening summer. He lived in such humble obscurity as was naturally the lot of a German immigrant without means or influential friends. The details of this period are unknown, but it is altogether probable that during the long winter evenings he was cultivating some of the various accomplishments for which he afterwards became famous. Of these more hereafter.

His tailoring establishment in Germantown did not prove a success. So he decided to turn farmer. His practical wisdom taught him that the best farming land is found in the river valleys. Consequently in the spring of 1726 he gathered together his scanty belongings and with his family pushed westward into the Conestoga valley as we have seen. The place where he located is pointed out today in Lancaster county. Here he came in contact with the Ephrata community, with whose adherents he had friendly intercourse, but he found little sympathy with many of their practices. As a farmer he prospered. The next year after his arrival he hired to work on his farm,

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

Israel Eckerling, who afterwards became a leader at Ephrata.

A statement by this man Eckerling in the *Chronicon Ephratense* makes it highly probable that Sower joined the Dunker church about this time. After speaking of his arrival in the Conestoga valley and the religious sects that he found there, Eckerling continues: "After that I worked for Christopher Sower, who brought me to a meeting of the new congregation, at which I was strengthened in my good resolve to such a degree by the words of the Superintendent, that on Whitsuntide of the year 1728, I was incorporated in the new congregation by holy baptism, together with my master and another brother, Jacob Gass by name." The context makes it clear beyond question that the new congregation here referred to was that of the Dunkers, which had been organized some three years before and over which Conrad Beissel now presided. The only uncertainty about the matter is the bare possibility that Eckerling might have meant by the words "my master" some one other than Sower. But then the question comes, whom else could he have meant? This point the reader will have to settle for himself.

If this may be accepted as sufficient evidence that Sower at this time received baptism at the hands of Beissel, it clears up a much-controverted point. In 1728 Whitsuntide fell on the 9th of June, which, considering the evidence sufficient, we may henceforth regard as the anniversary of Sower's admission into the church. It was in December of this same year

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

(1728) that Beissel withdrew from the Dunkers and set up for himself.<sup>1</sup> As Sower had been received about six months before this, while Beissel was still a regular minister in the Dunker church and in charge of the Conestoga congregation, it follows that Sower's admission was in every way regular and legal. After the division Eckerling and Gass became disciples of Beissel, but Sower remained loyal to the principles he had accepted, and after a few years removed from the neighborhood of these misguided and visionary hermits.

Meanwhile there was great religious activity in the Conestoga valley. The followers of Beissel, or Sababarians, began a religious crusade with fiery zeal. Revival meetings were frequent and enthusiastic. Proselyting went on actively; not without many hindrances, however. Nor were the hindrances from without more determined, frequently, than those from within. The solitary brethren could not determine among themselves what they really believed. Long and heated were the discussions among them on such controverted points as original sin, the judgments of God, or final doom. These discussions were sometimes very exciting and caused great trouble. There is one instance on record in which one of the disputants was so affected by a controversy in which he participated that he died soon after from the effects of it.

No wonder a man of Sower's practical sense held

---

<sup>1</sup> For an account of this separation and the relation of the Ephrata Society to the Dunkers see extended note at the end of this chapter.

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

aloof from such enthusiasts. While he refrained from taking any part in these bitter discussions, yet the unrest and excitement they engendered were not without their sorrowful influence upon him. In the summer of 1730 a scandal gained currency which inculpated Beissel and two young ladies who had moved to the neighborhood of his dwelling for instruction and spiritual consolation. This plunged the community into still greater excitement. Beissel and the girls were honorably acquitted, but the case had so incensed Beissel that he forthwith wrote and published a little tract which he entitled, *Die Ehe das Zuchthaus fleischlicher Menschen* (Marriage the Penitentiary of Carnal Man). As an immediate result of the excitement and of the issue of this pamphlet two married women of the neighborhood left their husbands and went into retirement. One of these was Maria Christina, wife of Christopher Sower, who, tradition says, had been baptized by Beissel in 1726, soon after the arrival of the Sowers in the valley of the Conestoga. Now further influenced by the teachings of the mystic, she deserted home, husband and child, to follow the fortunes and vagaries of the enthusiast.

The winter of 1730-1731 must have been a long and dreary one for Christopher Sower. His little cabin on the bank of Mill Creek, once the abode of happiness and comfort, seemed peculiarly barren and desolate to him as he sat by the fire in the long winter evenings with his nine-year-old son by his side and thought of the wife and mother only a little way

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

off, held under a spell of mystic influence with which he could feel no sympathy. And when he remembered the strife and contention which had filled the neighborhood almost since his arrival, surpassing in fierceness at times the cold blasts of December that swept down the Mühlbach, carrying the icy chill into the midst of his home and heaping up the snow in great drifts about his doorway; or when the angry howl of the wolf rang out on the night air, a fit emblem of the fierce passions of his neighbors, his heart almost sank within him. With these discouragements we are not surprised that when spring again returned he disposed of his farm and returned with his son to Germantown, whence he had come five years before.

The next seven years are an important part of his history, being the period of preparation, so to speak, for his renowned career as editor and publisher. Having already changed his occupation several times, it was perhaps not difficult for him to do so again. But it seems he was not in a hurry to settle upon a new line of work. With powers of mind now well matured and religious convictions fully settled, he cast about for a time, testing his powers and inclinations before selecting a vocation. That he tried a number of things in the years following his return to Germantown there is abundant evidence.

He learned the carpenter's trade. Soon, too, he was described as a skilled wheelwright and cabinet-maker. And it was not long until he added to these accomplishments that of clock-making. In this last he be-

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

came very proficient. He manufactured timepieces of various designs and sizes. For a time this seems to have been his principal occupation, as the sign over his door bore the inscription, "Christoph Saur, Uhrmacher."

The art of clock-making he learned from Dr. Christopher Witt, with whom he lived for a time after his return from the Conestoga country. Dr. Witt is credited with having built the first tower clock in this country, the curious timepiece at Ephrata, bearing the legend: "C. W. 1735." The Doctor was also something of a philosopher, with decided mystical tendencies. He gave instruction in physics, medicine and the occult sciences. He was a very learned man for his time and country, and his influence on Sower was very pronounced, and in the main beneficial.

Under his tuition Sower began the study of the plants about Germantown. This proved to be wonderfully fascinating to him. He became skilled as a botanist, but his study of plants was not that of a scientist. He cared less for scientific distinctions and classifications than for medicinal properties. This latter led him far afield. He did original work here for which he has never received credit. Naturally, along with his study of plants and their medical properties, he was led to the compounding of vegetable remedies, for which he later became famous. His medicines met with such universal favor and the demand for them was so pronounced that he continued to manufacture them until late in life. Even after he had become known in two hemispheres as a great publisher and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

book-maker, he still kept a small room in his printing establishment in Germantown where these remedies might be procured.

From the fact that he manufactured medicines and sometimes performed simple surgical operations, such as letting blood, it has been thought by some that he was a doctor of medicine and that he at times practiced his profession. It has even been printed in books that he studied medicine at Halle in Germany. There is no evidence, however, to show that he ever studied medicine anywhere as such. His study of botany and natural history, at first under the direction of Dr. Witt, later independently, led him to acquire all the medical knowledge he ever possessed.

Sower was one of those persons who develop slowly and do not attain the full maturity of their powers until late in life. As we have seen, his accomplishments were due largely to his own private study and work. He was emphatically a self-made man. A statement in the *Acta Historico-Ecclesiastica*, quoted by Professor Seidensticker,<sup>1</sup> evidences the many-sidedness of his mechanical skill, and confirms the belief that his accomplishments were the result of his own private study. From the Professor's account I translate as follows:

“He (Sower) is a very ingenious man, a separatist, who has learned thirty trades without a teacher. For he came to America as a tailor and now he is a printer, an apothecary, a surgeon, a botanist, a manufacturer of clocks and watches, a cabinet-maker, a

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichtsblätter*, 2 Band.

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

book-binder, the writer of a newspaper who himself manufactured the entire equipment of his printing establishment, a drawer of wire and lead, a manufacturer of paper, etc., etc."

Soon after his return from the Mühlbach valley, Sower leased a piece of ground in Germantown and built a small house upon it. The tract contained six acres and fronted on what is now Germantown Avenue. The house he erected was two stories high and stood back some distance from the street, with the gable towards the street. In this building he established his printing press in 1738, and for a dozen years after this it served him both as a dwelling and a printing establishment.

When Christopher Sower first conceived the idea of establishing a German printing press in America is not known. It is not improbable, however, that the possibility of such a thing came to him before he left the Mühlbach valley in 1731. During his residence in the neighborhood of Ephrata the Zionitic Brotherhood had brought out two hymn books, which Benjamin Franklin had printed for them in Philadelphia. The relations between Franklin and the Brotherhood had, however, not been cordial, owing chiefly, it would seem, to his contempt for the "Dutch," as he called the Germans.

When Franklin announced his intention to publish *Die Philadelphische Zeitung* on June 11 of the next year (1732), the need of such an establishment was, in all probability, still more forcibly suggested to Sower. It was clear to his mind, as future develop-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ments will show, that a German newspaper controlled by a man who hated everything German as cordially as Franklin seemed to do was not calculated to advance what he regarded to be the best interests of his countrymen. There is evidence that from this time he began to plan and work to the end of establishing a press of his own.

In passing it should be observed in regard to Franklin's paper that it was the first newspaper in America printed in the German language. But it was not printed with German letters. Franklin had no German type until more than ten years after this, receiving the first from Christopher Sower soon after he had finished printing his Bible in 1743. The *Philadelphische Zeitung* was printed in Roman characters, and purported to be a translation of Franklin's English paper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. It was issued on Saturdays and seems to have been a weekly. Franklin's purpose at first, however, was to issue it only every two weeks, as his announcement shows. After stating that the *Gazette* will appear on the following Monday, he adds, "And on the Saturday following will be published *Philadelphische Zeitung*, or Newpaper in High-German, which will continue to be published on Saturdays once a fortnight."

Franklin's paper does not seem to have been a success. It never became popular among the German settlers nor did it ever reach a large circulation. That there was room for a German newspaper in the colonies, however, is shown by the enthusiastic reception accorded Sower's venture along this line a few years

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

later. It is not known how long the paper was continued. It is safe to say, however, that it was promptly driven from the field after the appearance of Sower's *Geschicht-Schreiber*, if, indeed, it endured so long.

As to the feasibility of setting up a German printing establishment in the colonies, Sower does not seem to have hesitated long. It is known that soon after the time of which we are writing he was in correspondence with some of the German clergy in England, and that overtures were made to them in regard to a printing press. Nothing came of this, however.

About the same time Sower was carrying on a correspondence with the authorities of the Halle Institution in Germany. Under date of June 15, 1735, he wrote a letter to Rev. Gotthilf August Francke, requesting that a press and type be purchased for him and sent to America. Payment was to be made in future, presumably from the proceeds of the printing business. The press was not shipped, however, because of a doubt, as Francke expressed it, "whether any service would be rendered by a printing-press in the West Indies."

What further efforts were made by Christopher Sower in the succeeding months to provide himself with a printer's outfit, we have no way of knowing. We may be sure of this, however, that he was intensely in earnest about the matter, and would leave no stone unturned that would help him to the attainment of his coveted prize.

With the determination worthy of a great cause he

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

persevered in his efforts until the spring of 1738, when we find him in possession of his highly prized press. In a letter dated at Germantown, November 17 of the same year, he expressed his gratitude that his long-felt wish had finally been gratified. "But where," he exclaims, "can I find words to praise the good God? I am greatly indebted to him. My all be at his service and for the glorification of his name. This was in weakness my desire and longing for the many benefits, which have come to me during my sojourn here as well as during my whole life. For these reasons I have desired to establish in this land a German printing-press, which N. bought for me and forwarded to this place."<sup>1</sup>

The person here referred to as N. has been thought to be Jacob Gass, a member of the Ephrata community, whose acquaintance Sower had made during his residence in the Conestoga valley. There is no historical evidence, however, to prove that this is so, and how Sower came by his press remains to this day an impenetrable mystery.

There are various interesting legends connected with this part of our narrative, and even these may help us to arrive at some degree of truth.

One account states that the outfit, consisting of press and a small collection of type, was purchased in Germany. If this is true, Sower must have had friends who donated the purchase price, of which we know nothing, or the press was a gift.

---

<sup>1</sup> Geistliche Fama, No. 25.

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

Abram H. Cassel is of the opinion that Sower's press was the one on which the famous Berleburg Bibles were printed about 1726. He says the Brethren and others who were bringing out this Bible secured a larger press when the work was partially finished, and that the old press was sent to the Brethren in America and became the property of Christopher Sower.

Another story, which is probably only a different version of the preceding, has it that the Brethren in Germany soon after their organization in 1708, procured a small printing press on which they printed some of the works of Alexander Mack, Hoffman, Gruber and others. Later, the story goes, when persecutions scattered the Brethren, this press was sent to those who had come to America and was put in the possession of Christopher Sower because no one else had room for it.<sup>1</sup>

There is a tradition, also, that seems to have been current from the time the press was first set up, that it was of domestic construction, the work of the printer himself, and that only the type had been imported. It is highly probable that there is an element of truth in this tradition. When we remember Sower's eagerness in the matter, the difficulties in the way of his achieving his object, and above all, the unusual mechanical ingenuity of the man, there is certainly no inherent improbability in the story. On the other hand, it is rather what should naturally be expected. This belief is also in accordance with the statement

---

<sup>1</sup> See Gospel Messenger for December 8, 1906.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

enumerating Sower's accomplishments, quoted in the early part of this chapter, and is further made probable by the certainty that he afterwards invented many appliances as the business developed.

Since these stories are all alike unsupported by evidence, we shall have to relegate them all to the limbo of fable and, as to the question whence Sower procured his printing-press, simply confess that we don't know. It is most reasonable to suppose, however, that he secured a press from some source to start with, and afterwards improved it by useful inventions as occasion demanded. However acquired, the press was at any rate at length set up. And now began a career which, for business integrity, loyalty to principle, and devotion to a high ideal has few parallels in the history of American printing.

This first issue from this mysterious press, which was to become so famous, was a broadside and bore the following title:

*Eine Ernstliche Ermahnung, An Junge und Alte:  
Zu einer Ungeheuerlichen Prüfung Ihres Hertzens  
und Zustandes. Kürzlich aus England nach Ameri-  
ca gesandt, und wegen seiner Wichtigkeit Aus dem  
Englischen ins Deutsche treuliche übersetzt; Von  
einem Liebhaber der Wahrheit.*

(Translation) An earnest admonition to young and old, to a sincere testing of their hearts and conditions. Recently sent from England to America, and, because of its importance, faithfully translated from English into German, by a lover of truth.

This firstling of the German press in America was

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

printed on only one side; the reverse was blank. The typography and press work were good, showing that it was not done by a novice. Who aided Sower in this piece of work is unknown. It is a curious fact that in the publisher's imprint on this first issue of his press Sower's name appears spelled with an e, Sauer. Up to this time and usually afterwards he spelled his name simply "Saur."

Because of its historical significance this "first page printed in America in German type" has become quite a relic. Only three<sup>1</sup> copies are known to exist. It was dated "den 3ten Monath des Jahres 1738," (the third<sup>2</sup> month of the year 1738), and fixes the time when the Sower press began its operations.

Another important publication of this first year was the almanac. Continuing his letter of November 17, partly quoted above, he writes: "Now I could find no more suitable means (vehiculum) to make this (the establishment of his German printing-press) known throughout the land than to issue an almanac, the title of which I send herewith, together with a copy of a translation from the English."

This translation was, without doubt, the *Ernstliche Ermahnung*, his first imprint.

This letter fixes the antecedent date of issue of the first number of the almanac which afterwards be-

<sup>1</sup> In the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and in the private collections of Judge Pennypacker and Rev. A. Stapleton.

<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that in 1738 the year began on March 25, so that the third month would correspond with the latter part of May and the early part of June. It is probable that the Sower press began work about June, 1738.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

came very popular. How soon after November 17 the almanac appeared we now have no way of knowing; in all probability, however, it was issued before the end of the calendar year, which at that time was the 25th of March. The title of the forthcoming publication was announced in the above-mentioned letter for the first time, and, fully stated, runs as follows:

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender. Auf das Jahr nach der Gnaden-reichen Geburth unseres Herrn und Heylandes Jesu Christi 1739. In sich haltende: Die Wochen-Tage; Den Tag des Monath; Tage welche bemerkt werden; Des Monds Auf-und Untergang; Des Monds Zeichen und Grad: Voll-und Neu-Licht; erst und letzt Viertel: Aspecten der Planeten samt der Witterung; Der 7 Sternen Aufgang, Sud-Platz und Untergang; Der Sonen Auf- und Untergang; Nebst einem Bericht, woher viele im Calender vorkommende Dinge herstammen; Erklärung der Zeichen, Aderlass-Täfflein, Anzeigung der Finsternüsse, Courten, Fären u. s. w. Eingerichtet vor die Sonnen-Höhe von Pennsylvanien; Jedoch an denen angreuzenden Landen ohne merklichen Unterschied zu gebrauchen. Zum ersten mahl herausgegeben. Germanton, Gedruckt und zu finden bey Christoph Saur, wie auch zu haben bey Joh. Wister in Philadelphia.*

I have reproduced this long title in full for several reasons. It is an example of the extreme fullness of titles generally in the eighteenth century. It shows too how fully Sower had matured his own plans before he undertook to issue the almanac. Especially does it make clear the purpose of the publisher, to bring to-

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

gether in this work a variety of useful information that would be practically helpful to those into whose hands it might come.

A translation of the title follows. The High German American Calendar, for the year since the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 1739. Containing the days of the week, the days of the month, notable days; the rise and setting of the moon, the phases of the moon and its elevation, full and new moon, first and last quarter; the aspects of the planets, together with the temperature; the rise of the seven stars, their south point and setting; the rise and setting of the sun, together with a statement showing whence many things appearing in the calendar are derived; an explanation of the signs, the cause of darkness, etc. Calculated for the latitude of Pennsylvania, but can be used in neighboring sections without material change. First issue. Germantown, printed and for sale by Christopher Sower; also to be had from John Wister in Philadelphia.

Under this title the Sower almanacs were published for forty years. The style and size were also unchanged; and the same woodcut on the front page, representing a landing scene, characterizes the whole series. So important is this almanac in the history of early German publications that a more extended account of it is reserved for another chapter.

Two other sheets at least came from the Sower press in this first year of its operation: "*Frühling ist herbei gekommen u. s. w.*," and "*Mein Heiland der du bist mir, u. s. w.*," both of which were discovered

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

in 1904 by Rev. A. Stapleton of Wrightsville, Pennsylvania.

The rest of this chapter will be taken up with an account of the first book issued from the Sower press, together with the strange incidents connected with it.

This book was the curious *Weyrauchs-Hügel*, a large hymn book prepared by the Ephrata community. It was a duodecimo volume of 791 pages in all and contained 692 hymns. The full title page follows.

*Zionitischer Weyrauchs-Hügel oder: Myrrhen Berg, Worinnen allerley liebliches und wohl reichendes nach Apotheker-Kunst zu bereitetes Rauch-Werck zu fiden. Bestehend In allerley Liebes-Würckugen der in Gott geheiligen Seelen, welche sich in vielen und mancherley geistlichen und lieblichen Liedern aus gebildet. Als darinnen der letzte Ruff zu dem Abendmahl des grossen Gottes auf unterschiedliche Weise trefflich aus gedruckt ist; Zum Dienst Der in dem Abend-Ländischen Welt-Theil als bey dem Untergang der Sonnen erwecken Kirche Gottes, und in ihrer Ermunterung auf die Mitternächtige Zukunfft des Bräutigams ans Licht gegeben, Germantown: Gedruckt bey Christoph Saur, 1739.*

(Translation) Zionitic Hill of Incense or Mountain of Myrrh, wherein are to be found all sorts of lovely and sweet-smelling odors, prepared according to the apothecary's art. Consisting of all sorts of Love-operations in divinely sanctified souls, which has expressed itself in many and various spiritual and lovely Hymns. Also therein the last call to the supper of the great God is, in various ways, most admirably ex-

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

pressed, for the service of those who, in this benighted part of the world, at the setting of the sun, awaken God's kingdom; and for their encouragement it is given to the light on the midnight appearance of the Bridegroom. Germantown: Printed by Christopher Sower, 1739.

This fantastic title gives expression to the mysticism that permeated the Zionitic Brotherhood. It is in perfect keeping with their vagaries and the want of reality in so much of their life and conduct.

This was the first large piece of work undertaken by Sower. The almanac, as we have seen, came at the end of the year, and besides the three fugitive pieces to which reference has been made, nothing is known to have come from the press this year.

The *Weyrauchs-Hügel* was undertaken in the early part of the year 1738, soon after the installation of the press. Since the work was being done for the ~~Zionites~~ sterites, as many of them as had had any experience in a printing office were glad to lend their assistance and so help to pay for the job. These were Rev. Peter Miller, Samuel Eckerling and Michael Wohlfare. Peter Miller, who was an experienced printer, was made a sort of general supervisor and proof-reader. Eckerling and Wohlfare set most of the type and acted as an advisory board. Israel Eckerling seems also to have been connected with the work, probably in operating the press or man of odd jobs.

Three months after the press had been set up, work on the *Weyrauchs-Hügel* was progressing nicely. Experienced workmen had been found to set the type, ar-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

range the forms, correct the proofs, and so forth. It would even seem that Sower had already begun to manufacture his own ink, but of this we cannot be quite sure. In June the first sheets were struck off, and great must have been the joy, both of the printer and his associates, when they spread out to dry the first pages of the first book to be printed in America in German type.

Just here a difficulty arose, however. The small supply of paper on hand was soon used up, and when the printer went to lay in a new supply, none was to be had. This made an awkward situation, but a careful investigation proved to Sower that there was no paper on the market.

After all the difficulties of procuring the press, type and other supplies had been overcome, this "corner" in the paper market presented an unexpected obstacle. But Benjamin Franklin, it was soon learned, had a monopoly on the whole stock of paper in the province, and he refused to let Sower have any except for cash and at his own price.

Now, Christopher Sower, whose resources had already been taxed to the uttermost, could not produce the cash for the paper needed to print an edition of a large book, and that at an exorbitant price. Finally the difficulty was overcome by Conrad Weiser, one of the wealthiest members of the Ephrata Brotherhood, going to Philadelphia in person to see Franklin, and pledging his personal credit for the amount of the paper bill. This was at the beginning of July. The

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

paper was now delivered and work on the book was resumed.

Franklin's account books show that between July 9 and September 8, 1738, Conrad Weiser bought of him in behalf of the Ephrata community 157 reams of paper, for which he paid 93 pounds, 8 shillings, and 6 pence.

This conduct on the part of Franklin is not so much to be wondered at when we remember that he had already printed three hymn-books for the Ephrataites, and when the contract for this fourth book was given to Sower, Franklin looked upon him as a rival, whose invasion of his province he would not suffer with impunity.

After this hitch with Franklin, work on the hymn-book went forward steadily, but not without many hindrances and annoyances. The Rev. Peter Miller proved to be an exacting supervisor. He seems to have prided himself on his superior knowledge of the printing business and to have displayed this knowledge on every convenient occasion to the detriment of the inexperienced printer. A letter dated at Germantown, November 20, 1738, and printed in the *Geistliche Fama*, describes the situation thus:

"Sower's newly established printing press is becoming very troublesome to him, and he must pay more dearly for his experience in this venture than in anything he has so far undertaken. He must print for the Seven-dayers (*i. e.*, those who keep the seventh day of the week holy) a large hymn-book. They are

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

exacting and particular enough about it, as one hears; therefore it makes him much trouble."

But these were not the greatest of his trials. As the proofs of the hymns were struck off during the progress of the work, his conscience several times troubled him in regard to the tone of some of the hymns, which he regarded as savoring of idolatry. He called the attention of Miller and his associates to the questionable statements, which they explained in a manner innocent enough. As the work was theirs and he presumed they ought to know what was intended, he was glad to accept their interpretation.

When the 400th hymn was put in type, however, and his attention was called to it by the proof-reader, he protested strongly against admitting it into the collection; for it seemed to him "to be a fulsome and almost idolatrous glorification of Conrad Beissel." He wrote Beissel in regard to it, urging him to omit the objectionable hymn and giving his reasons in full for so doing. Beissel replied with haughty insolence but ignored the particular objections that Sower had urged. To this insolent letter Sower replied with a volley of sarcasm. Thus on both sides the contest waxed warm, and the feelings engendered grew exceedingly bitter. The controversy was unfortunate and ended in an estrangement that lasted several years. It is just to add that the relations of these two men in later life were altogether cordial. This was true especially after 1744, the year in which Sower's wife broke through the mystic veil that had so long clouded her vision and held her from home and fam-

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

ily, and returned once more to her own. Both men were doubtless sorry for their part in the dispute, and now charitably cast the mantle of forgiveness over their unfortunate difference.

The controversy just referred to does not seem to have materially interfered with the progress of the book, as it was finished early in the next year (1739), about twelve months from the time it was begun. It was issued in an almost incredibly short time, when we take all the circumstances into consideration, and is highly creditable to the printer and those associated with him in its production.

The preface is dated Ephrata, the 14th day of the 4th month, 1739, which fixes approximately the date at which the work was completed. "This book," says Prof. Seidensticker, "contains 654 hymns in 33 divisions, each inscribed with a heading as fantastic as the general title. After page 744 follows an appendix of 38 hymns with a separate title."

The book contains nearly all the hymns in the three Franklin prints, which all together numbered one hundred and forty-nine, together with some new ones composed by Beissel and his associates especially for this collection. Most of the hymns, however, were obtained elsewhere, mainly from the *Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel der Kinder Zions*, a collection of hymns first published in Germany and later several times in this country by Sower. To these were added some popular German airs, doubtless because the tunes were familiar and the songs were general favorites.

The issue of the *Weyrauchs-Hügel* was an impor-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

tant event in the history of German printing in America in general, and of German Baptist printing in particular. While Andrew Bradford and Benjamin Franklin had been printing German books and periodicals in Philadelphia for some ten years, they had, as we have seen, no German type, and all their publications were issued in Roman characters. This first volume of the Sower press is therefore the first entirely German book produced in the new world.

As regards German Baptist printing, it may be said that with the issue of this book Sower's Rubicon was crossed. Sorely taxed as he had been, in resources and in patience, during this first year, he gradually got more squarely on his feet, as he mastered the details of his business, and felt more and more at home in his new calling. It was not many years until his press was one of the most active in the country, and as an editor he was soon recognized as a power in directing public opinion.

To the establishment of this press the Dunker church owes in large measure the first period of its greatness. By what conscientious principles Christopher Sower was actuated in his public work will appear more fully in the course of this narrative. As the leader of his countrymen in their new environment, and as the defender of their rights, he will always hold an honored place in the esteem of posterity. While he did not publish a "church paper" or pose as a religious leader, he carried the principles of Christianity into everything he did, and thus found himself the acknowledged leader of a much larger following than the particular

## Christopher Sower's Printing Press

religious body with which he affiliated. Broad-minded, liberty-loving, conscientious, he stood for the highest interests of his fellows as Christians and as men, and thus made himself the leader of the German population of the new world independent of sect or creed.

Note.—The history of the people variously known as Sabbatarians, Ephrataites, Solitary Hermits, Mystics, Zionitic Brotherhood, Hermits of the Cocalico, etc., to whom reference is repeatedly made in these pages, needs a few words of explanation. They have generally been identified with the German Baptists and their peculiarities and extravagances attributed to them. For the sake of historical accuracy, therefore, a word of explanation as to the relationship of the two bodies is essential. It should be noted that the Ephrata Society never was a part of the Dunker or German Baptist church, but was an offshoot from it. It was the result of the first division after the organization of the church, and occurred in 1728. The leader of the movement was Conrad Beissel, who came to America in 1720. He settled at Germantown. As he was poor he apprenticed himself to Elder Peter Becker to learn the weaver's trade. He remained with him about a year. In 1724 he received baptism at the hands of Elder Becker. Almost immediately he was put to the ministry and began to preach. It was not long until he began to utter strange doctrines. He denounced marriages and advocated the celibate state as the only one in which full Christian character could be attained. He also accepted the seventh day as the Sabbath. In 1728 he published a defense of his views. The Brethren, or Dunkers, with whom he was still in partial fellowship, remonstrated with him, but to no avail. Finally in December of this year he openly renounced all relationship with the Dunkers and organized an independent body. One of his followers, Jan Meyle by name, at his request

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

baptized him in the Conestoga creek. Then he in turn rebaptized all who were willing to accept his doctrine. In this way he "washed his hands" of having any further part or parcel with the Brethren. Now began those strange practices that have so often and so erroneously been attributed to the German Baptists. He organized a monastic system. This provided for three classes of inmates, spiritual virgins, solitary brethren, and household members; this last being provided for those who had previously married and now wished to join the society. For several years the growth of the organization was not rapid. In 1733 the first building was erected. It stood on the bank of the Cocalico creek, at what is now Ephrata. It was for the spiritual virgins. It was a small building and was later replaced by Saron, the women's house. Bethesda was the home of the solitary brethren. The Saal was the house of worship. Other buildings were added later. The organization was governed by a superintendent, with the aid of a prior, a prioress, and other officers. The members wore monastic garbs and the men submitted to the tonsure. The government was communistic. All worked part of the day at least, and the proceeds from whatever source went into the common treasury. As early as 1745 the Society had its own printing press, which, next after the Sower press in Germantown, became the most influential German press in colonial America. Music, embroidery, designing, engrossing, hymn-writing, book-binding and the like were some of the more artistic occupations that engaged their attention. The Society flourished during the lifetime of Beissel. After his death in 1768 it began to decline, and in the course of the following century completely passed away. The old buildings are almost all that remains to tell the story of the quaint, devout, but sadly misguided mystics that once inhabited here. Celibacy, the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath, the communistic system of government, the monastic sys-

## **Christopher Sower's Printing Press**

tem of life and the monastic garb, together with a general air of mysticism that enveloped all their thought and actions, were the most distinct traits of this strange organization. With none of these did the Dunker church ever have any part or parcel. During the whole history of the Ephrata Society there was no affiliation whatever between the two bodies. On the other hand Ephrata became a city of refuge for any who from any cause became dissatisfied within the ranks of the German Baptists. Why two bodies so entirely distinct should have been so generally confused in the minds of the public, and for so long a time, is not very clear.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SOWER BIBLES.

*First Edition.*

After the *Weyrauchs-Hügel* was completed and the *Pensylvanische Geschict-Schreiber* had been securely established, Christopher Sower undertook a work that, of itself, would have made his press famous and have clothed his name with everlasting honor. This monumental work was his printing of the Bible in German characters.

The greatness of this undertaking we, of the present day, cannot fully understand or appreciate. The difficulties that arose in the process of the work, and the continual opposition and annoyance to which the venturesome printer was subjected were trying in the extreme. To a person less sturdy and determined than Sower they would have been insurmountable. The heroic manner in which he overcame every obstacle and carried his worthy enterprise to a successful issue is one of the triumphs of the printing business.

As soon as Sower had established himself as a printer in Germantown and had begun his career as a public servant, he supplied himself with a stock of Bibles and Testaments, which he dispensed to his countrymen. These comprised several editions, the most important of which were those printed at Halle and at Berleburg. The Halle Bibles were, for the most part, of

## The Sower Bibles

small size and in fine print; and some of them not very expensive. Many of these were distributed by Sower, "gratis to the poor and needy, and for money to such as were able to pay the price," as he himself states in his prospectus.

These Bibles were objected to, however, by some of the sterner sort in the different dissenting sects, because of vague doubts as to their authenticity. Printed as they were at the Francke Institution, the stronghold of Lutheran Pietism, they could not easily be disassociated in the minds of the Separatists from various European experiences that still rankled in their hearts. The only other low-priced Bibles in German sold at this time in America were those printed at Amsterdam, but I have not found any evidence that Sower handled any of them.

The Berleburg Bible was liked exceedingly by all the nonorthodox sects, including the German Baptists. This famous edition was completed in 1726 after being in press some five or six years. It was issued by the dissenting bodies in Germany who distrusted the editions brought out under the influence of the established churches. Alexander Mack and perhaps some of the other early Dunkers contributed liberally to the undertaking. It was printed in large type and bound in four large folio volumes. It generally sold for about twenty-five dollars, and by Sower, according to his price-list, for four pounds, fifteen shillings.

This was the only German Bible on sale in America that was entirely to the liking of all the dissenting denominations. Besides enjoying their complete con-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

fidence as to its contents, it had also the advantage of being printed in large type; and considering the scarcity of spectacles in those days, especially among the poorer classes, it was almost the only Bible that many of the older persons were able to read. The high price, however, made it inaccessible to the greater part of the German immigrants.

This was the situation that confronted Sower soon after he had established his press in Germantown, and caused him to consider seriously the advisability, or rather, I should say, the possibility of producing an American edition of God's Word. Clearly another edition was needed: one that should combine the various excellences of the several editions already referred to—cheapness, large print, and above all, freedom from questionable matter.

Just how early the thought of publishing such a Bible first presented itself to Sower, we have at this time no way of knowing. At any rate, early in 1740 the plan had taken definite shape in his mind. In the early part of this year he published a broadside, announcing his purpose to print the entire Bible in German characters, and giving a prospectus of the work. The sheet was 9 1-2 by 7 1-2 inches, the size of a leaf to be used in his proposed work. The reverse showed a specimen of the type that was to be used.

This prospectus sets forth the purpose and plan of the printer fully, and I have reproduced it entire.<sup>1</sup>

"It is to some extent known that at different times

---

<sup>1</sup> From copy in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

## The Sower Bibles

Bibles, New Testaments, etc., etc., have been sent to the publisher at Germantown, some of which went to the needy without pay, others were sold, and the money given to the poor. This we have done so far as it would reach; but in the meantime we have seen that it did not go far, because many would have been glad to pay for Bibles and Testaments, if they were only to be had. Although at different times some were brought over from Germany, so high a price was often set upon them, that many were frightened away or were not able to pay the price.

"We have also taken notice that people from Germany arrive here in the greatest poverty, and are still coming, who have not even a Bible, and are not able to get one. Many come first as servants to English people, who either have no Bible themselves nor read one, and on the contrary have nothing but their work to talk about, to say nothing of what is still worse. When then such persons settle down at a distance, their beginning is usually nothing but work, and whatever else corrupt nature brings with it. The children are likewise brought up in this manner. And as in Germany, the institution of churches and schools are not wanting to bring the letters into the minds of young and old (although the true fear of God and the Christian virtues are little touched upon), and as now also the Bible is printed in the language of the Turks; yet the circumstances of this country are bringing about such a state of affairs, that (to speak generally) the ignorance of the letters seems to increase with many as time goes on.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

"Now as we believe we have the ability to meet this need in part, we are anxious to contribute our share to it.

"Since, however, such an edition of the Bible will require a greater expenditure than we are able to lay out, it has seemed necessary to invite advance subscriptions, or to speak plainly, that every one who may desire a Bible shall send in his name and pay half a crown, which is necessary first, that we may know how many we may hope to print. And secondly, that we may have some assistance towards the publication, because the paper for one Bible alone will cost seven shillings and six pence. And thirdly, since it will be necessary for us to borrow something towards the publication, that we may know how we may be released again. And lastly, because this country is still so new, we have as yet no precedent before us.

"As regards size, we are willing that it shall be a large quarto, that is, in length and breadth like this sheet, and of such type as the present, which we believe will be legible to old people as well as young. The thickness of the book will be about a hand high. We are willing to use good paper in it.

"We are not willing to add any explanations or interpretations, because we hope that every one who reads the Holy Writ with an upright heart will, under the leading and fear of God, learn to realize his misery and ruined condition. When he realizes this he will long for the true Redeemer, and when he shall learn to know his Redeemer and see how He will release him from his misery, he will love Him; and because he

## The Sower Bibles

loves Him, he will keep His Word. Yes, if he keeps His Word, the Father will love him and will come to him and make His home with him. And then when Divinity dwells in him the Holy Ghost will be the best expounder of His Words, which Moses, the prophets, Christ, along with apostles and evangelists have spoken and written. This will be the truest (richtigste) interpretation.

"As regards the price, of this we can say nothing definite. First, because we do not know yet how many we shall print, as a small edition will make the book more costly, while many will make each come cheaper. Secondly, because divers good friends of truth and lovers of divine teaching, out of love to God and their needy neighbors, have already contributed something and still others have offered to do so; partly that the Bible may be issued at a low price, partly that the economical or stingy may have no excuse and the poor may not be burdened. After more such benefactors are found, and we are enabled to act, the price will be fixed. However, this much we can say, that unbound none will cost more than fourteen shillings, which it is hoped no one will consider dear, when he remembers that printing paper in this country is at least four times as expensive as in Germany."

Who these "good friends of truth and lovers of divine teaching" were that were willing to encourage the enterprise with their means as well as their words, we have now no way of knowing. We may be sure, however, that they were some of the early Brethren or Dunkers. It would be exceedingly interesting to know

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the names of all who encouraged this great enterprise in any way, but with the exception of the daring printer, we do not know a single person who bore any part of the responsibilities of the undertaking. Besides the Brethren, it may be that some of the Ephrataites lent financial aid, as it is known that many of them were kindly disposed towards Sower, and when the work of printing actually began, he employed several of them on the work. It is probable, too, that adherents to other dissenting bodies, such as the Mennonites and the Schwenkfelders, may have aided to the extent at least of sending in advance subscriptions.

It is certain that no aid or encouragement was to be expected from the so-called orthodox Protestants, the Lutherans and Reformed, as their ministers were agents for the Halle and Amsterdam Bibles and arrayed themselves from the beginning against Sower and his enterprise. Their opposition grew exceedingly bitter and their misrepresentations of Sower and his purpose were mercilessly unjust. This was only one, however, of the hindrances and annoyances which came up in the course of getting the Bible in print. Of these we shall speak more fully a little later.

This opposition seems all the more remarkable from the fact that Sower had taken the precaution to assure the public that he was unwilling to make any comments or place any interpretations on the text of the Holy Writ. His sole desire was to get the pure text of God's Word in the hands of the people, trusting to the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to lead men into the ways of right and truth.

## The Sower Bibles

After the broadside was issued, some eighteen months passed during which sufficient advance subscriptions and possibly a few donations came in, so that Sower felt justified in carrying his plan into effect. He inserted in his almanac for 1742 an announcement that the proposed Bible would be printed, and otherwise called attention to the nature of his undertaking.

By March of the next year he had sufficiently matured his plans to publish the following announcement in English in the two leading Philadelphia papers, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, edited and owned by Franklin, and Andrew Bradford's *Weekly Mercury*. It appeared in the *Gazette* for March 31, 1742, and on the following day in the *Mercury*.

“Whereas Numbers of the Dutch People of the Province, especially of the New Comers, are through mere Poverty unable to furnish themselves with Bibles in their own language, at the advanced Price that those which are brought from Germany are usually sold at here: Therefore Christopher Sauer of Germantown proposes to print a High-Dutch Bible in large Quarto, and in a Character that may easily be read even by old Eyes. And several well-meaning people having promised to contribute something towards the Encouragement of the Work in General, that the Books may be afforded cheaper to real poor Persons whether servants or others; Notice is hereby given, that the said Work (God willing) will be begun about the end of this Instant April; and that some Judgment may be made of the quantity neces-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

sary to be printed, all persons who are inclined to encourage the work, or to have one or more of the said Bibles, may subscribe before that time with the above-said Christopher Sauer in Germantown, or with Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia. 2 s. and 6 d. is to be paid down towards each Bible (for which receipts will be given) and the Remainder on Delivery of the Books, which, 'tis expected, will be in about a Twelve-month. If no Charitable Contributions towards it are received, the Price of each Bible will not exceed 14 shillings, and it shall be as much less as those Contributions will enable the Printer to afford; of which Contributions a fair Account shall be given the Publick."

Germantown, March 26, 1742.

The notice in the *Weekly Mercury* was just like the above with the exception that Andrew Bradford's name was inserted in the place of Benjamin Franklin's. By these advertisements, it will be observed, Sower constituted both Franklin and Bradford as agents for his forthcoming Bible. Now that he had fully committed himself to bring out the Bible, let us see what the venturesome printer was up against.

In the first place, as we have seen, Christopher Sower did not have the capital necessary to finance an enterprise such as the present one. He had asked for advance subscriptions, it is true, and had received some, but the down payment was small and all that he could have received from this source would have gone only a short way towards carrying through an

## The Sower Bibles

enterprise like the one in hand. He had also the promise of donations, but by his own words, they were only promises and only several of them. Certainly from the financial point of view, the undertaking seemed to be attended with great risk.

By training, too, Sower was far from being an experienced printer. He had been farmer, tailor, clock maker, mechanic, and all will concede that he was more than ordinarily ingenious, but it is impossible that he could have been skilled in the various details of the printer's art. It was only a few years since he had set up his printing press. He had printed one large book and several others, and had established a monthly newspaper, and did a general jobbing-office business. But in the higher branches of the art, such as proof-reading and designing, he had made but little progress, and in managing his business on as large a scale as the present undertaking would require he had had no experience.

Again he was not equipped to perform a piece of work like the present. To issue a large edition of a quarto Bible was a stupendous undertaking in those days. The little shop in Germantown was but poorly equipped for such an enterprise. To carry it through successfully, tons of paper were required, font upon font of additional type was needed, and above all skilled workmen were indispensable. Under the circumstances none of these seemed obtainable, and to a spirit less resolute than Sower these difficulties would have seemed insurmountable. How clearly he saw his way in all this we have no means of knowing. He prob-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ably penetrated the gloom with an insight of which we can now form little estimate, or, may he have simply trusted his enterprise to the guidance of an All-wise Providence, relying upon the belief that such a worthy cause would not be allowed to fail?

It would seem that the necessary type was procured from a type foundry in Germany. Just how it was secured, however, does not seem to be known.

As to the paper, Sower's experience with Franklin while he was printing the *Weyrauchs-Hügel* had taught him a lesson. He had experienced the disagreeable effects of a corner in the paper market, in the midst of an important piece of work. Resolved not to be taken a second time in the same snare, he fortified himself on this score by establishing a paper-mill of his own. Who may have aided him in this or have furnished means towards it, if any one, we at the present time do not know. Most of the paper used in the Bibles was undoubtedly made in Sower's mill. Linen rags were solicited for this purpose and were made up into an excellent quality of book paper. The fact that a few leaves in several copies of the Bible have been found to contain the Ephrata water mark, shows that a little of the paper must have been made at the Ephrata mills. But there is no reason to believe that more than a very small portion of it came from there.

The ink with which the Bible was printed was also manufactured by Sower. It was made chiefly of linseed oil and soot. These were boiled together in a large kettle until the mixture reached a certain con-

## The Sower Bibles

sistency, being stirred all the time. The quality was determined largely by the color and fineness of the soot, which, in turn, was determined by the fuel used. This made an excellent quality of ink, far superior to that made at Ephrata and used in the cloister publications, which have been so highly and deservedly praised.

The Ephrata ink was made of copperas and gum arabic in equal quantities with a double portion of gall nuts, all dissolved in a sufficient quantity of rain water to give it the proper thickness. To this a little vinegar was sometimes added. This ink produced beautiful work but was lacking in enduring qualities. Long standing impaired it and exposure to the light faded it. Some of the finest ornamental work produced at the cloister has been practically lost by the ink's fading. Sower's Bibles, on the other hand, are as clear and distinct today as they were the day they came from the press. His ink enjoyed for a long time the distinction of being the best printer's ink manufactured in America.

So it was that the material equipment for bringing out the Bible was provided very largely by Sower's own ingenuity. But one element was yet lacking, without which the whole plan was still doomed to failure. This was skilled labor to do the work of typesetting, proof-reading, designing title pages, and so forth. All records are peculiarly silent as to these matters. History has not preserved a name, except that of the printer, in connection with this all-important work. His resourcefulness here, as in many an-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

other trying situation, triumphed again over the difficulty and secured the needed help. Whom he secured, or by what means, we shall perhaps never know. That the work was done promptly and accurately, however, the results fully demonstrate. The Bible is singularly free from errors of any kind, and that the type and proof work were done by skilled workmen there can be no doubt.

In the absence of any documentary evidence, certain conditions existing at the time may throw some light on the situation. It is known that several of Sower's personal friends of many years' standing, who had had experience in Europe as printers and proof-readers, were now living in the neighborhood of Germantown. One of these was Jacob Gass, who, it is supposed, procured the printing press for Sower some four years before this. As we have seen, he was baptized at the same time with Sower and they had long been close friends. Gass was now living at Ephrata but was in constant communication with the Germantown printer. He had been a practical printer in Europe, and there is scarcely a doubt that in this time of need Sower secured his aid. There was also John Hildebrand, a highly educated man, who had learned the trade of typesetting in Germany. For several years he had lived as a neighbor to Christopher Sower in Germantown. Being members of the same church, they had worshiped together. Although at this time he had gone over to the monastics and was living at Ephrata, there is evidence that while Sower's Bible was being printed he was in Germantown. The natu-

## The Sower Bibles

ral presumption is that he was assisting in the work. The presumption is all the stronger from the fact that Hildebrand did not get on well with Beissel and his life at Ephrata was not happy. Israel Eckerling, also, who had worked on Sower's farm in the Mühlbach valley, knew something of printing-office work, having been employed in this capacity for a short time before coming to this country. He, too, had joined the Monastic Brotherhood, but was probably glad for the opportunity to render a service to his old master. Besides these there was Peter Miller, one of the leaders of the Ephrata movement, who had performed an important part in the publication of Sower's first book, the *Weyrauchs-Hügel*. Tradition has it that he was again employed by Sower in the production of the Bible, and we can well believe that the tradition is true.

Whom else the printer may have secured on the work it is now impossible to tell. There were still others at Ephrata that could have given useful aid. The probabilities in favor of those I have mentioned amount almost to proof.

One other consideration confronted Sower of rather an alarming kind. His proposition to print the Bible was made in violation of an act of the British Parliament. By this Act the privilege of printing the Bible in England and the British possessions was vested in certain institutions, such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Had any prosecution been instituted against Sower, he would doubtless have been fined or imprisoned, or both, and his property confiscated. Fortunately, on this score, he was unmolested.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

When we consider all these difficulties that confronted Sower at the very beginning of his enterprise, and the resolute manner in which he set about to overcome them one after another, we must admire him all the more; for his every act is prompted by his unselfish devotion to the interests of his fellow-men. Without sufficient equipment or experience, without hope of financial returns, with the prospect of punishment and confiscation of property, he was willing to undertake a work of the greatest difficulty, because he was convinced that it would redound to the good of his fellow-men. A life of such devotion deserves to be held up as a model to the youth of America for all time. Because he worked in quiet and shunned notoriety, he has never been brought under the searchlight of public notice; yet his life is an inspiration, and the facts of it deserve to be preserved, to which it is hoped the present work may make some contribution.

The motive that dominated Sower's life, and the spirit with which he worked, was expressed by the motto that decorated the walls of his little shop. It was printed in the largest ornamental type that Sower possessed, and read as follows:

*“Zur ehre Gottes und des Nächsten Bestes.”*

(To the honor of God and his neighbor's good).

With this as the motto of the first German printing establishment in America, we are not surprised that it has been abundantly blessed of Heaven and has

## The Sower Bibles

developed into a mighty factor of our new-world civilization.

Press work on the Bible began in April, 1742. The work now progressed steadily, and by the time the first snow fell in the following autumn half of the text was in print. The whole process was extremely laborious. The type was of course set by hand. Only four pages could be printed at a time, and this on a lever press. All the appliances and fixtures were primitive and crude, and most of them home-made. There were none of the conveniences that nowadays would be regarded as indispensable to a well-equipped printing-office. The men that did the work, whoever they may have been, were doubtless inspired by the motto of the little establishment and wrought for "the glory of God and the good of mankind."

With all their care, however, many mishaps occurred. Sometimes typographical errors were discovered after the sheets were printed. These errors would then be corrected and other sheets run off to take their place. Sometimes the forms would get crooked and the sheets printed from them would have to be thrown out. Occasionally a sheet was faulty or got into the press in the wrong position. At first, too, until the pressman acquired some skill in managing the lever, the impressions were frequently too heavy and sometimes too light, so that the sheets could not be used. Scrupulous care was exercised by the printer that no sheet, in any way imperfect, should be used. So in one way or another no less than fifty sheets of the paper,

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

on the average, were spoiled to every ream—or about one sheet out of every ten.

But this was one of the slightest of Sower's troubles. Scarcely had the work been begun in good earnest, with a prospect that it would succeed, when the pastors of the orthodox churches began to stigmatize Sower and oppose his work. They accused him of corrupting the text of the Bible and interpolating dogmas of his own. They openly denounced the forthcoming Bible from the pulpit, and warned their parishioners to have nothing to do with it or with the Arch-Separatist who was laying this trap to ensnare their souls. It should be observed that these charges were made by the regularly ordained ministers of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, and before they had seen a word of the new Bible or knew what it would be like.

This opposition was increased in November of the same year (1742), by the arrival of Heinrich Melchoir Mühlenberg, who was sent out by the Halle Institution to take the oversight of the Lutheran congregations in the provinces. Now it must also be remembered that Pastor Mühlenberg had been constituted the agent for the Halle Bibles in America, and came prepared to furnish them at small cost. He threw the whole weight of his influence against Sower and his Bible from the very beginning, denouncing him from the pulpit and in his private correspondence.

Sower, as was natural, corrected these false reports from time to time, in his paper and almanac. The spirit of his chastisement may be gathered from the following: "Divers Brothers, named Neidhard (Grudg-

## The Sower Bibles

er) have put themselves to great pains to belittle the Bible which we still have in press. They say that it is falsified, and that we have not confined ourselves to Luther's translation, that it will not be bound, and what else was not told? All of which is too contemptible to deserve an answer. If any one is interested in the matter, let him have patience till August, then he will see with his own eyes that this is not so.

"God reward them much good for the defamation."<sup>1</sup>

When the Bible was almost completed, a new annoyance arose, by several parties coming forward and offering to take subscriptions for a Wittenberg edition of the Bible for twelve shillings, a lower price than Sower's advertised rate. In his paper for June 16, 1743, Sower shows by enumerating the various items of expense connected with putting a German edition on the American market that the thing proposed is absolutely impossible, "unless," as he naively adds, "the printer, binder, factor, custom officers, etc., do-nate their charges." "But," he goes on in the same ironical tone, "whoever still thinks such a thing pos-sible can apply to George Wahnseidel, (lunatic) who will order one for twelve shillings. The order will be taken free of charge. If nothing comes from it nothing will be lost. It is to be wished that they could be furnished still cheaper, so that God's Word would become abundant in the hands and hearts of all men. Our own Bible, soon to be issued, in an ordinary bind-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Geschicht-Schreiber* for June 16, 1743.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ing with clasps, will cost eighteen shillings. For the poor and needy there is no price."

The presswork of Sower's great task was finished early in July, 1743. A month later some of the copies were stitched and glued and in the hands of subscribers. We can well believe that the printer felt a great load lifted from his shoulders when the last printed sheets were taken from the press. A local legend, which may well be true, relates that when the work was at length finished late on a summer night, the printer collected his workmen about him in the little shop, and crossing his arms on his breast and lifting his eyes towards heaven, exclaimed, "Dank Gott es ist vollbracht." (Thank God it is finished.)

The work was not only speedily performed, but the quality was in every way all that had been claimed for it. Christopher Sower had conscientiously lived up to his printed statements in regard to the work in every detail. He saw to it that his mill should turn out paper every whit as good as that of his prospectus and other sample sheets that he had given to the public. He surrounded himself with skilled workmen, we do not know with what trouble and expense, so as to give to his patrons and the public a Bible, not only free from technical errors, but also in keeping with the best skill in book-making of his day.

When we consider the scanty and crude equipment with which this monumental work was produced, we are astonished that such accuracy and perfection could have been achieved. There are very few errors of any kind. Indeed, as Sower states in his preface, more

## The Sower Bibles

than a hundred errors in the thirty-fourth Halle edition, which was used as a basis, were corrected. One of the most glaring misprints is on the title page, where, by the omission of an *a*, Parallelen appears as "Parllelen." The typographical error was not noticed until the whole edition was printed, and was left uncorrected. This was so probably because the title page had been produced with considerable expense and effort, and the error was such as could not possibly lead to misunderstanding.

The title page was printed in two colors, red and black, and was probably the first attempt at a rubricated title in this country. It ran as follows:

BIBLIO,  
Das ist:  
Die  
**HEILIGE SCHRIFFT**  
Altes und Neues  
Testaments,  
Nach der Deutschen Uebersetzung  
D. Martin Luthers,  
Mit jedes Capitels kurtzen Summarien, auch  
beygefugten vielen und richtigen Parllelen;  
Nebst einem Anhang  
Des dritten und vierten Buchs Esra und des  
dritten Buchs der Maccabaer.  
.....  
Germantown:  
Gedruckt bey Christoph Saur, 1743.

The first, fourth, sixth, eighth, eleventh and fourteenth lines of the title were printed in red, the rest in black ink. The first line is in plain capitals, all the rest in ornamental letters of different size and design.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

The title was skillfully designed and corresponds favorably with that of the best German editions of the time. Who the artist was we shall probably never know, not impossibly the printer himself. The art work throughout shows the same care and taste. The ornamental head pieces at the beginning of Genesis and Matthew, and also the preface, consisting of an artistic blending of stars and flowers, are highly appropriate. So are also the seraphs' heads on the unfilled pages at the end of the Old and New Testament. A large ornamental capital stands at the beginning of each book of the Bible, and a smaller capital at the beginning of each chapter. All this shows that Christopher Sower was not satisfied to have his Bible merely correct, but that he was determined to have it in every sense complete, in its artistic make-up, as well as in scholarly accuracy and mechanical perfection.

The large octavo leaves were trimmed to the dimensions of 8 by 10 inches, the size of the forms or type pages being 8 3-4 by 6 1-4 inches, with double columns. The Bible contained 1282 printed pages, exclusive of the reverse of the title page of the Old Testament, which was left blank. They were distributed as follows: Title, 1 page; Vorrede (Preface) 1 page; Verzeichnisz aller Bücher Des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Index to all the books of the Old and New Testament) 1 page. This index gives the number of chapters in each book and the page on which each book begins. This is followed by the text, in the following groups: Books of the Old Testament, pp. 1-589; The Prophets, pp. 590-805; Books called the Apocrypha, pp.

## The Sower Bibles

806-949; Supplement or addition, pp. 949-995; Title page to New Testament, 1 page; Index to the Books of the New Testament, 1 page; Books of the New Testament, pp. 3-377. Following this was the register of epistles and chapters to be read on Sundays and special feast days, 3 pages; and Kurtzer Begriff or a Brief Compend of the various editions of the Bible hitherto published, 4 pages.

There are several things in the above outline that need a few words of explanation. It will be noticed that there were nearly two hundred pages of apocryphal matter that is not found in the ordinary Protestant's Bible of today. This matter has always been accepted by Catholic theologians, however, as a part of the Inspired Word. When Luther translated the Bible he rendered the entire Catholic version into German. In his American edition Sower used Luther's text throughout, except in the third and fourth books of Ezra and the third of Maccabees. These were printed according to the Berleburg text.

While there were numerous verbal differences in the rendition of the two texts, there was nothing of real importance in the third of Ezra or the third of Maccabees. In the fourth of Ezra, however, there is a radical departure from Luther's translation. When the dissenting bodies brought out their Bible at Berleburg in Westphalia, in 1726, they printed the fourth of Ezra according to the four ancient manuscripts in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, and Ethiopic, all of which agree, but differ from the Latin, in containing a dissertation on heaven and hell after the thirty-fifth verse

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

of the seventh chapter. This matter, comprising seventy verses, treats of the degrees of punishment and glorification. It was not in Luther's translation, because the Catholics, not finding it in the Latin, persistently refused to admit it into any of their translations. The fact that Luther's Bible lacked this matter was one of the chief objections urged against it by the Dissenters before Sower undertook to issue an American edition. As these seventy verses were found in four out of five ancient manuscript translations of the original Greek, which was lost, to exclude it looked to them like omitting a part of God's Word.

That the Dissenters' position was justified by the facts is clear. Time has also shown that they displayed the evidence of wise judgment and sound scholarship in the matter, and were not warped by prejudice and sectarian bias. Almost a century and a half later, in 1875, a Latin manuscript of the ninth century was found at Amiens containing the disputed matter. It was at once published, and has since been included in all versions of the apocrypha, both Protestant and Catholic.

What is now admitted by every one without opposition, raised a storm of indignation, however, in 1743. The pastors of the Lutheran and Reformed churches seized upon this as a means of vilifying Sower and denouncing his Bible. To such an extent were men swayed by their passions in the eighteenth century that these clergymen actually assailed the character of the honest printer for publishing this apocalypse of an apocrypha, which none of them believed to be a part of the In-

## The Sower Bibles

spired Word. Sower had indicated the irrelevance of these three books by printing them in smaller type.

But this was only one of their points of attack. The appendix known as Kurtzer Begriff or Brief Compend, also raised their ire. Now, the purpose of this summary was to compare the variant renderings of a number of the most important translations of the Bible. Certainly this looks like a matter sufficiently innocent in itself, and to the unprejudiced must have been a feature of interest and value, but it was violently attacked by the orthodox clergy as a means used by the printer to disseminate denominational views. To those who may look into this Compend today the opposition of these pastors will seem strangely violent and unreasonable, as there is nothing of a sectarian nature in it at all.

When Christopher Sower finished the presswork on his Bible in July of 1743, he probably looked upon his task as well-nigh finished. It soon occurred to him, however, that he would have to glue the Bibles for his patrons, who could then have them bound according to their own notion. Accordingly he inserted in the August (1743) number of his paper this announcement: "The Bible printed in Germantown is now ready; and because not every book-binder has the facility for gluing, we will glue them ourselves, so that no inexperienced person need undertake it; and when this is done and they are dry, which will probably be at the end of this month, then every one can have them." He also repeated the statement published before, that if any one desired his Bible without the third and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

fourth books of Ezra and the third book of Maccabees, he need only to send the publisher word to this effect and his copy would be prepared for binding without it. The same statement applied also to the Brief Compend. Since opposition had been made to these, the printer had no desire to inflict either of them upon any one against his will.

As time went on it became more and more apparent to Sower that he would be called on not only to glue the sheets, but also to bind most of the copies of his Bible. So he set about to make arrangements by which he could accommodate his patrons. By the first of November of the same year he was able to announce in the *Geschicht-Schreiber* the following arrangements: "The printer makes known, because he sees that there are very few who desire unbound Bibles, that he cannot have so many bound as in this short time are demanded of him, although he would like to see every one accommodated. Those who do not live far from Ephrata can procure their Bibles there bound or unbound, in exchange for their receipts and payment of the balance. Such as have not subscribed can also find them there, and order them bound as they wish to have them, or get them already bound from Samuel Eckerling." The announcement states further that H. Rieger, Doct. Med., has been constituted an agent for the Bibles in Lancaster, and that he will be supplied with bound copies from Ephrata. It also states that arrangements are being made to put bound copies on sale in New York at the first opportunity.

## The Sower Bibles

It seems that Samuel Eckerling was not able to supply all the demands made upon him at Ephrata and Lancaster, so that on February 16, 1744, Sower printed in his paper this notice: "Because they at Ephrata cannot bind as many Bibles as are desired of Mr. Rieger at Lancaster, so we make known that bound volumes will immediately be sent thither from here." The appearance of this notice two months later would seem to indicate that the demand was at length supplied: "At Mr. Jacob Frederick Reiger's, in the new city of Lancaster, are now to be had Bibles in different bindings and at different prices." This was printed in Sower's paper for April 16, 1744, and probably marks the first time at which the supply was equal to the demand for the Bible since its issue.

In the fall of 1741, as we have seen, Sower inserted in his almanac for the next year, a call for advance subscriptions and donations to his proposed Bibles, promising at the same time to give to the public a true account of all that should be received. In his almanac for 1744, he refers to his former statement and says, "To make this promise good, we announce that H—ch H—1 has contributed for the poor seven shillings. From Germany a Christian soul, led by a high hand, ordered a donation to aid the printing of the Bible, but as the same made hardly any impression, we added to it according to our means, and lowered the price from fourteen shillings to twelve shillings, at which price it remains unbound. This we have done according to our means. J. A. R. paid before-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

hand for seven copies to give to seven poor German servants in his service, which is a good example."

As the distribution of the Bibles went on and the people had time and opportunity to examine the work thoroughly and judge of its contents, they became more and more pleased with the scrupulous fidelity with which Sower had fulfilled his promise. The Bible was a faithful transcript of Luther's text, as had been advertised. The fact that in every respect it proved to be fully up to its advertised claims, and in some ways even surpassed what was claimed for it (the typography was certainly superior to any reasonable expectation, and the price was lower than the advertised rate), made it at once very popular, so that the demand for nearly the entire first year was greater than the supply.

This success only increased the opposition of the orthodox clergy, however, who never seemed to miss an opportunity to vent their spleen on the harmless printer and his harmless Bible. Sower paid no attention to these assaults on his own character, but corrected from time to time misstatements in regard to his book. Mühlenberg, in one of his letters to the homeland, accuses Sower for having abused him in one of his corrections, "and," he adds, "for no other reason than that on my conscience I have warned my congregation when they thought to buy his newly printed Bibles to beware and see if he had not interpolated opinions of his own." This was written in the spring of 1745, after Sower's Bible had been on the market for more than a year and a half. It

## The Sower Bibles

would seem that if Pastor Mühlenberg's conscience troubled him in regard to Sower's Bible he might have procured a copy and set himself right before this.

But the bitterest and most violent opposition came from Casper Ludwig Schnorr, the Reformed minister at Lancaster. Located as he was in the very center of the German population of Pennsylvania, his vehemence caused no little annoyance to the printer, and doubtless interfered with his sales to some extent. As late as March 15, 1745, in his report to the Amsterdam Classis, he speaks of Sower and his Bible and says, "Upon all occasions I preach against it, and caution my hearers not to purchase it." He continued his senseless opposition long after the Bibles became pretty generally distributed, iterating charges the most unreasonable and unjust, without seeming to think it necessary for the sake of his own reputation, either to square his statements with the facts, now in the hands of the people, or to withdraw them.

This annoyance finally led Christopher Sower to administer a rebuke a little sharper than was his wont. "It is no secret," he writes in his newspaper, "that many Germans, unknown to themselves, have been compelled for a long time in America to listen to and be served by certain ministers. Now we are neither an enemy nor a hater of any one, for the more wretched a creature is, the more pity and commiseration we owe it. About a year ago we received reliable information from Germany, that others of this kind, who were driven from their native place for immorality, meant to seek service in this country. We owe the

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

duty unto God and to all men now to publish this warning; for by vicious teachers the ignorant are made worse and are angered and are led into wranglings and disputes, more than they are benefitted. This is especially so with the young and lightminded hearers, who look more at the life and actions of the minister than to the truths that he preaches unto them.

"Soon after this came Casper Schnorr, who acted as if he were all right. So is any one, be he the greatest sinner in Europe or here, if he repent of his wicked ways. Then the latter shall not be remembered by God and all his children in eternity, just as when a righteous man turns from the unrighteousness which he has done, this shall not be remembered.

"The dear man, however, instead of improving himself, thought to revenge himself upon Sower, but commenced at the wrong end. He preached at Dulpeshocken and other places that the Germantown Bible is false, that one should beware of it (as many of his hearers affirm). Now if the dear man had abused Sower in every manner, and painted him with the great black tail of Satan, Sower would never have answered a word in his own justification. But now as he had proclaimed the Bible as false and has published it, he will have to answer unto God. May He be merciful and tender unto him, when he repents of his other sins and vices, and entreats God for mercy, and receives it. Then it will be an easy matter for him to recall publickly what he has thus far proclaimed."

As soon as the first rush of filling advance orders

## The Sower Bibles

for the Bible was over, but while the steady demand was still greater than the supply, Christopher Sower took occasion to remember his old friend, Dr. Ehrenfried Luther at Frankfort on the Main, in a substantial way. It will be remembered that it was from Dr. Luther that Sower received the type used in printing his Bible. As a sort of thank offering for the successful completion of his great task, Sower sent a dozen copies of his work to Dr. Luther, to be distributed as the latter saw fit.

These Bibles had a remarkable history. They were shipped by the brig, *Queen of Hungary*, which sailed from Philadelphia, December 5, 1743. Off the Cape of St. Malo the vessel fell into the hands of French and Spanish pirates, who appropriated the cargo, including the Sower Bibles. In the disposal of the booty later on, it is said, the case of Bibles was sold for four Rix dollars.

A year or such a matter elapsed before Dr. Luther was able to find any trace of the lost books. At length he located the man who had bought them, and after a few exchanges of letters, they were finally sent to their destination, as clean and fresh, it is said, as when they were packed.

Great was the joy of the Frankfort type-founder, if we are to believe the current tradition, when he saw the excellence of the work that had been produced with his type. He composed a Latin dedication, a copy of which he attached to each Bible. These are said to have varied slightly according to the rank of the persons for whom the different copies were intended.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Following is a rather free translation of the inscription in the copy donated by Dr. Luther to the city library of Frankfort.

"This holy Book, never having appeared before in the West Indies either in English or Dutch or any other language, but recently published without any model in the German language for the first time, and that by the help of God with type from his own foundry, H. E. Luther, J. U. D. and C. W. A. and Counsellor of Würtemburg, dedicates it to the magnificent city library as a gift. Frankfort on the Main, the first of June, 1744."

Dr. Luther took great pride in distributing these Bibles to distinguished persons of his acquaintance. He presented one to the Counsellor of Münchenhausen in Hanover. By him it was bequeathed to the widow duchess of Brunswick, Elizabeth Sophia Marie, "as an ornament to her collection of Bibles." Another copy was given to the imperial high-counsellor Herman Karl Keyserling, who had lived at Luther's house during the election of emperor held in Frankfort in 1745.

According to a memorandum<sup>1</sup> said to have been found in one of these Bibles, it seems that Dr. Luther at one time intended to give them to the different royal libraries of northern Europe. After keeping one for his own collection, he designated as recipients for the rest, the libraries of St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin, Hanover, Dresden, Gotha, Wei-

---

<sup>1</sup> Sachse—German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, vol. 2.

## The Sower Bibles

mar, Brunswick, Cassel, and Stuttgart. That this purpose was never fully carried out is evident from what has been said above.

At all events they were distributed with care, and were highly appreciated, not only by Dr. Luther, but also by the crowned heads of Europe.

It is not known where these Bibles were bound. The binding is different from any known to have been done in America at that time. It is highly artistic as well as durable. There were no facilities either at Germantown or at Ephrata to produce such decorative tooling and embellishing as these Bibles show. It is probable that the books were sent to Dr. Luther in the stitched and glued state, and that he, in the fulness of his admiration, had them beautifully bound as presents to his royal and noble friends.

The first edition of the Sower Bible met with steady sales and gradually silenced the opposition made to it. The large edition of 1200 copies, which was unusual for the time, supplied the demand, however, for almost a score of years. In January, 1746, when the Bible had been on sale nearly two years and a half, about one-fourth of the edition, or nearly 300 copies, had been sold. Christopher Sower the Second planned for a second edition in 1762, four years after the death of his father, and almost immediately, it would seem, after the first edition had been exhausted.

In the busy life of Christopher Sower this publication of the Bible was but an event. Yet amidst the long list of his various achievements, this Bible stands preëminent as the great monument of his life and work.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Projected in the second year of his career as publisher, it was brought forth under many difficulties and great opposition, was placed on the market amidst the grossest misrepresentation and the fiercest prejudicial antagonism, and was still supplying the demand when the publisher had been in his grave several years. Thus in one way or another it touched almost the entire active period of his life. The Bible represents the spirit in which he wrought—the spirit of devotion to the welfare of others. As the years go by the copies of Sower's Bible that still exist become all the while more and more prized—a type of the unselfish life of the publisher.

### *Second edition.*

The second edition of the Sower Bible does not call for extended notice. It should be observed in the beginning, however, that this second edition was the work of a different man from the first. The first Christopher Sower died September 25, 1758. The second edition of the Bible, which appeared in 1763, was therefore the work of the second Christopher, the heir and successor to the founder of the Germantown printing establishment.

In *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender* for 1763, Christopher Sower the Second first gave public notice of his intention to issue a second edition of the Bible. His statement ran thus:

“As the Bibles printed nineteen years ago in Germantown are now sold, and no more are to be had, we have decided that our part of the world is not to be

## The Sower Bibles

without this excellent book, and we have already provided ourself with a quantity of good paper and have made a beginning with a new edition of such a quarto Bible as the former one. We are also resolved to make it according to the best of our ability, and the very best in every part, and to eradicate as much as possible all mistakes that crept into the former edition; also to add an appendix, so that these Bibles shall in no way be inferior to any of similar size coming from Europe. In paper and binding they will be far better. As this is a great undertaking and we cannot secure workmen just as we would like, so the lovers of this Book of Books will have to exercise a little patience until the close of this year 1763, as none need be expected any sooner."

This Bible came from the press near the end of the year 1763, and was in every respect almost an exact counterpart of the former edition. The Kurtzer Begriff, which had been a source of opposition to the former edition, was nevertheless retained. In size, quality of paper and typography, this second edition was scarcely to be told from its predecessor. The books were substantially bound in leather, with edges stained. In binding some of them were provided with clasps.

While in general appearance the two editions are strikingly similar, there are, nevertheless, numerous details in which they differ.

A very noticeable one is found on the title page: that of the second edition is not rubricated. In all other respects, in design, arrangement and typography,

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

they seem to be identical. Of course the word parallelen, which had been accidentally printed without the second *a* in the former edition, was corrected.

This is not designated on the title page as a second edition, except in so far as the date indicates it. In the preface, however, the editor designates it as such and indicates in what respects it will be like its predecessor.

The index on the reverse of the preface page is unchanged from the former edition.

The first page of the text has at the top an ornamental head piece, not very different from that of the first edition.

From here to the end of the Old Testament, the paging of the two editions is exactly the same; both end near the middle of page 949. The Third and Fourth Books of Ezra and the Third Book of Maccabees are, in each edition, printed in finer type. This type too, seems to have been identical in the two editions, as it ends near the same place on page 995. The face of a cherub is inserted in the unfilled space.

The title page of the New Testament is arranged as follows:

Das Neue  
Testament  
Unsers  
Herrn und Heylandes  
Jesu Christi,  
Verteutsch  
von  
Dr. Martin Luther  
mit  
Jedes Capitels Kurtzen  
102

## The Sower Bibles

Sumarien,  
Auch beygefütten vielen richtigen  
Parallelen.

.....

Germantown:

Gedruckt und zu finden bey Christoph Saur, 1763.

This is a beautiful piece of work, both in design and execution. The capitals in the first, second, fourth, fifth, eighth and fourteenth lines and those in Sower's name are ornamental. Other capitals are plain.

Page 2 contains a table of contents of the books of the New Testament.

Page 3 has an ornamental head piece differing slightly from the one at the beginning of the Old Testament. Both are about an inch and a quarter wide and extend across the page. They are made up of four more or less distinct rows of ornaments.

The text of the New Testament ends near the middle of page 277. An ornamental piece (face of a cherub, but differing slightly from the one at the end of the Old Testament) fills up the page.

The next three pages are occupied with a register of epistles and gospels, etc., practically unchanged from the former edition.

The Kurtzer Begriff fills the last four pages of the book.

The facilities for doing all kinds of work in the Germantown Drückerei had been very much increased since the first venture in Bible printing was made. The mechanical skill and ingenuity of the first Christopher Sower have already been spoken of. A man who

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

could learn thirty trades without a teacher would not be long about a crude printing office in a frontier town without finding many things upon which to exercise his inventive skill. This was true in the experience of Christopher Sower the first. It is certain that he invented many appliances and conveniences to ease and facilitate the work of his office, but as he refused or neglected to protect his inventions by patent, others received the reward of his labor. In the quarter of a century since its founding, the Sower printing establishment had grown to be a well-equipped institution, with modern presses, book-bindery, ink factory, paper mill, and the latest conveniences of that day. Referring to this time, Isaiah Thomas in his *History of Printing in America* says, "Christopher Sower, Jr., was by far the most extensive book manufacturer then (1763), and for many years afterwards, in the British American colonies."

These were the changed conditions under which the second edition of the Bible was brought out.

In the preface Sower called attention to the fact that at the appearance of this second edition of the Bible in German, its publication in any other European tongue had not yet been undertaken in the western hemisphere.

The printing was done in less than a year. As a well-equipped bindery was now a part of the establishment, the whole edition was soon bound and ready for delivery.

The copies of this edition are more numerous than those of either the first or the third.

## The Sower Bibles

### *Third Edition.*

When the second Christopher Sower undertook to issue a third edition of the Bible he could still say, in his preface, "There appears now for the third time on the American continent the Holy Writ, called the Bible, in open print in the High German language, to the honor of the German nation; since no other nation is able to show that the Bible has yet been printed in its language in this part of the world."

The fact here referred to seems strange in the light of the circumstances. It is known that there was a great dearth of Bibles at this time in the colonies. This was true more particularly of Bibles printed in English than in German. Of the latter great numbers of different European editions had been distributed through various agencies, as we have seen. Besides these, two large editions of the domestic product had been sold. It is interesting to note what an active interest the Sowers took in supplying this demand for the Inspired Word.

Of course it is understood that these two editions to which we refer were Family Bibles, the large quartos whose thickness was about a hand high, as the first Sower had described them. Now in addition to these the two Christopher Sowers up to and including 1776 printed no less than nine different editions of parts of the Sacred Writings. Most of these were editions of the New Testament in handy duodecimo volumes of between 500 and 600 pages.

The first of these appeared in 1745, two years after

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the first edition of the Hausbieble. It consisted of fifteen hundred copies, and was exhausted in less than ten years. Other editions of the New Testament appeared in 1755, 1761, 1763, 1766, 1769, 1775. It does not seem to be known how many copies of these different editions were printed; but it would appear that the demand for these handy volumes increased with time and that the succeeding editions sold off more rapidly than those which preceded them. Estimating the six editions after 1745 at an average of one thousand copies each, (it is not probable they were fewer than this) we have a round number of some seventy-five thousand copies of the New Testament from the Sower press alone that were distributed by the time the third edition of the Bible was ready for distribution.

Besides these the second Christopher Sower issued in 1773 an edition of the Psalms of David, and three years later a child's Bible (*Die Kinder Bieble*). This latter was a 12mo volume of 487 pages. Add these two editions and the first two issues of the Bible to the different editions of the New Testament, and it would seem that the number of copies of the Bible or parts of it issued and distributed by the Sower press up to 1776 must be considerably over one hundred thousand. So in supplying the demand for the Sacred Writings in the German tongue, the Sower press played a very important part.

All the while this domestic product was being put forth, there were constant importations from Germany, which were dispensed through various agencies. Probably the greater part of this foreign production,

## The Sower Bibles

however, was distributed through the clergy of the orthodox churches.

For the supply of English Bibles the conditions were not so favorable. No publisher in America had yet undertaken its publication, and six years more passed before such an attempt was made. The first English edition of the Bible, therefore, to be produced in America appeared in 1782. While no English Bibles were produced in this country up to this time, it does not seem that they were even imported in very great numbers. In 1777 there was such a dearth of English Bibles that Congress ordered 20,000 copies to be imported. I have been unable to ascertain whether this order was ever carried out or not.

Such was the situation at the beginning of 1776, when Christopher Sower the Second made known his purpose to print a third edition of the Hausbieble. Work was begun early in the year and by autumn the large edition had been printed and the sheets spread out in the loft to dry.

But these were troublous times, and business did not move in the Sower printing office with its usual alacrity. Before the presswork on the Bible was finished, it would seem that Christopher Sower retired from active management of his business. The tumult of war was now to be heard on every hand, and business was in large measure paralyzed.

During the winter of 1776-7 and the ensuing spring, some of the sheets were arranged and bound, and the volumes delivered to subscribers. But when the British troops came into Germantown in the next summer

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

most of the unbound sheets were still in the loft. They were ruthlessly seized by the soldiery and wasted. Some were strewn under their horses for bedding, others were thrown upon bonfires, while still others were converted into cartridges, says Isaiah Thomas, "and thus used not for the salvation of men's souls, but for the destruction of their bodies." The Sower establishment was practically broken up, the estate was confiscated and the stock afterward sold.

After the worst was over Christopher Sower collected a few sets of sheets that had survived the wreck and bound them. It is said that he gave one of these to each of his children, and there may have been a few others.

It is impossible to tell how many of this edition were bound and got into circulation. It is not probable that the number exceeded a few hundred. If there were more than this they must have been consigned to other parties for distribution, but there is no evidence that this was done, neither is it likely.

In size, appearance and workmanship, the third edition differs little from the former two. As in those, a good quality of rag paper was used, the product of Sower's own mill. The ink was of the same excellent quality as that for the other two editions, of which an account has already been given. The binding of all the copies we have seen or heard of was in strong leather with brass clasps, plain and durable.

The type used in this edition was also manufactured by the printer. This distinction has, I believe, been claimed for that employed in each of the former edi-

## The Sower Bibles

tions, but there is no good reason to think that the Sowers cast any type before 1770. It is known, on the other hand, that in 1773 they were using type of their own make.

That employed in the third edition is certainly as good as that in either of the others, if not superior. The impression is sharp and distinct and the lines clear-cut and even. The type was new—not so new, however, as to bear the marks of newness, yet on the other hand without any indications of wear. Undoubtedly within the three or four years since the Sowers began the manufacture of type, they had equipped their establishment anew, to a very large extent, from their own foundry.

The title page differs slightly from that of the former editions, and like the second edition was not rubricated. The same styles of letters were used, but all were printed in black. Of course the orthographical error in the tenth line of the first edition was corrected, and there were a few changes in the punctuation. At the end of the eighth line the comma of the first edition was supplanted by a semicolon, and the semicolon after the tenth line was displaced by a colon. Two lines were changed. By the addition of two words the third line was made to read,

*Die ganze Gottliche.*

Likewise, three words inserted into the last line made it read as follows:

*Gedruckt und zu finden bey Christoph Saur 1776.*  
*Dritte Auflage* (third edition) is inserted between two

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

lines extending across the page, which take the place of the ornamental division mark between the thirteenth and fourteenth lines of the title. Besides these changes in the title page and a new preface, the matter preceding the text was not different from that of the first edition.

It is worthy of note that the type used in printing the Third and Fourth Books of Ezra and the Third of Maccabees is a little finer than that used in the first and second editions. This matter fills nearly forty-seven pages in the first two editions but in the third only a little more than forty-three. This type, fresh from the new Sower foundry, produced excellent work, but varied to this extent from that that it displaced.

The New Testament title page differs considerably, too, from the former editions. It reads like this:

Das Neue  
Testament  
unsers  
Herrn und Heylandes  
Jesu Christi,  
nach der Deutschen Uebersetzung  
Dr. Martin Luthers,  
mit kurzem  
Inhalt eines jeden Capitels,  
und volständiger  
Anweisung gleicher Schrift-Stellen.  
Wie auch  
aller Sonn-und Fest-tagigen  
Evangelien und Epistelen.  
Dritte Auflage.  
Germantown,  
Gedruckt und zu finden bey Christoph Saur, 1776.

## The Sower Bibles

Only the capitals in the second, fifth, and seventh lines are ornamented; all the rest are plain.

At the end of the volume, the appendix known as the Kurtzer Begriff was omitted. New ornamental designs were also placed at the end of the Old and New Testaments. The edges were stained with a dappled red.

The price seems to have been raised somewhat, if the autograph in a copy in the Bridgewater College library is to be trusted. This states that the volume was purchased January 22, 1781, for one pound and fifteen shillings.

This edition, it has been claimed, is the most rare and valuable of the three. Says Miss Nancy V. McClland, writing in the *Philadelphia Press* for May 29, 1898:

"Contrary to all bibliological precedents, this (third) edition is more valuable than the first. The explanation lies in the warfare that aroused the patriotic people in the United Colonies at that time. When Germantown became the centre of disturbance the third edition of the Saur Bible played an important military part. It was torn up with a ruthless hand and used as gun-wadding to help along a righteous cause. Many an unfortunate Hessian hireling went to kingdom come with the aid of a piece of the third edition.

"So few of the books were left intact that they are rarities to be prized when possessed."

This statement is controverted, however, by Dr. John Wright in *Early Bibles of America*, where he says, "The first edition of the Sower Bible—that of

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1743—is a scarce book, and commands a high price. A copy offered at the Brinly sale a few years ago brought \$350. This is the highest price ever paid for a Sower Bible.”<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1894.

The truth of the matter seems to be this: There are almost certainly fewer of the third edition in existence than of the first. In this respect the third edition is exceedingly rare. But the difficulties under which the first edition was brought out give it an historical importance that the later issues can never attain.

---

<sup>1</sup> For this quotation from Wright's work I am indebted to Elder D. L. Miller.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SOWER PERIODICALS.

#### *I. Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

The periodicals issued by the Sower press were two in number, a newspaper and a magazine. I will include in this chapter also a study of the Sower almanac which was published annually for about forty years. These were all printed in German and were the pioneers in their respective fields in this country. In time they were contemporaneous with the famous periodicals published by Franklin. Sower's almanac was not very different in scope and principle from its famous cousin, Poor Richard. And the magazine, which was religious in its character, was the first of its kind to be produced in this country in any tongue. Franklin had started in Philadelphia a German newspaper several years before Sower set up his press at Germantown. But Franklin had no German type, as we have seen, and the few issues of his paper that were printed appeared in English or Roman type. So Sower's paper, which was printed in German type, was the first wholly German newspaper produced in America.

The first issue of this publication appeared on the 20th of August, 1739, and, as the small beginning of a great enterprise, it will always hold an important place in

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the history of our country. It was a small sheet 13 inches long and 9 inches wide, and contained four pages with double columns. Its title may be translated, as *The High-German Pennsylvania Recorder of Events*. Only one copy<sup>1</sup> of this first issue is known to exist. Since it has never been translated to my knowledge, and because of its rarity and importance, I have reproduced the greater part of it, which cannot help being exceedingly interesting to the reader.

Der  
Hoch-Deutsch  
Pensylvanische  
Geschicht-Schreiber,  
Oder:  
Sammlung

Wichtiger Nachrichten, aus dem Natur-und Kirchen-Reich.

.....  
Erstes Stuck August 20, 1739.  
.....

Geneigter Leser.  
(Kind Reader)

Among other idols which the coarse and subtle world of so-called Christians serve, not the least is the impertinence, the curiosity and inordinate desire to see, to hear, and to know very often something new; also to talk about it. To make a sacrifice now to this spirit of Athena with the issue of this collection of news we are not at all willing, still less to display ourself, or to seek fame and profit; but because we have formerly promised to make known the useful and important facts and occurrences, and also because impor-

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Cassel collection now in possession of Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh, by whose kind permission I am enabled to present the following selections to the readers of this book.

## The Sower Periodicals

tant facts, when they come to the ears and eyes of men, often make deeper impressions and cause deeper reflection than things which daily occur; so we will make a beginning here with such signs of the time as have recently and certainly taken place in this and other parts of the world, in the hope that they will produce, not without their own proper advantage, something of interest and alarm (auffschauens) among those who read them. We may also perhaps later make some observations and propound some useful questions of the time for those earnestly disposed to reflection, or also perhaps give some correct answers to these, to be given out in the same budget. Farewell, reader, and use this as you should.

For several years we have heard that the Persians and the Turks were engaged in a great war; scarcely had the Persians made peace with the Turks when they were in actual war with the great Mogul; and the Roman Emperor had scarcely secured a cessation of arms with the king of France when he went, together with Moscow (Russia), against the Turks. At first the Muscovites were victorious against the Turks; but soon the leaf turned, and the Turks were victorious; however, they still stood opposed to each other on the field. But what the Emperor and the Turks have been doing this year, of this we have had up to this time but little news; nevertheless the kingdom has mustered eighty thousand men, who are to march against Hungary. The queen of the Muscovites had promised to aid the Roman Emperor with her people, because he began war with the Turks on her behalf: the troops were brought together at Moscow and equipped. But when the Swedes saw this, that the Muscovites were moving their forces out of the country against the Turks, they wished to recover their land which the Muscovites had taken away from them because Sweden was weak. Then Moscow did not

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

wish to spare the promised troops, but wished to help the Emperor with money; but because the Emperor thought himself too weak against the Turks without help, he sent word to the Czarina that if she did not send him troops, he would have to make peace with the Turks; for he was tired of this grievous war. What was Moscow to do now? If the Emperor should make peace, then on the one hand the Turks would have their entire power, and on the other hand the Swedes would recover their land. So in the beginning of January she sent the Emperor fifty thousand men.

This is a little more than half of the old-world news in this issue. The rest is in a similar vein and has no particular interest. This is followed by

### *Copia der Proclamation unsers Gouverneurs.*

This proclamation is made to the people of Pennsylvania by his Majesty, the King of England, in regard to British commerce in the new world, and sets forth his reasons for declaring war against Spain. It recites the indignities and insults to which English merchants have repeatedly been subjected in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main. It also reproaches the King of Spain for negligence in protecting the rights of Englishmen in these waters according to the stipulations of existing treaties between the two countries. It is further charged that the Spanish King has neglected to pay an indemnity in gold, which had been agreed upon as a compensation for British losses in Spanish waters.

In consideration of these various grievances his British Majesty concludes his proclamation as follows:

## The Sower Periodicals

So we have finally decided to vindicate the honor of our crown, and, as a compensation to our unjustly treated subjects, to order that reprisals shall be made (else the people will avenge themselves) on the crown and subjects of Spain. We hereby give you full power to take prizes, and we give to each one whom you consider qualified the commission and permission to treat them in return as they have treated us; that war vessels, also private or pirate vessels, be fitted out to rob, overpower, capture, plunder and confiscate the ships and the goods upon them, which belong to the King of Spain or his vassals and subjects, or to any inhabitant of his country, boundary or estate: however, with this stipulation, that before such an one may go forth he shall give assurance that he will conduct himself as is necessary on such occasions. And in the commission you shall mention, and write down all points, and instruct each one in regard to it, and show him what is necessary in such cases; and in order to do so let this be your authority. Fare well.

By his Majesty's command.

Hollis Newcastle.

The governor then adds on his own behalf: For this reason let each and every subject of his Majesty under my government be upon his guard, so that all the evil and injury that the Spanish have in mind may be prevented; because they will wish to avenge themselves against such treatment as that with which your majesty has been under the necessity of using to secure the rights of himself and his subjects. Accordingly, every one, in whatever condition he may be, has permission to injure and annoy the Spaniards in any way he can. I am happy to publish and make known his Majesty's order. Furthermore it is his royal Majesty's wish and pleasure to make known to me by the Duke of Newcastle, one of his Majesty's most distinguished secre-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

taries of state, that no ammunition or equipment for war or provisions of any kind whatever, shall be furnished to the Spaniards, under severe punishment and his royal Majesty's highest displeasure. Wherefore, let every magistrate, officer and all others hold themselves in readiness and use all possible industry to prevent anything of the kind.

Given under my hand and  
the great seal of the province of  
Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, the 20th  
of August, 1739, and in the 13th  
year of his Majesty's reign.

George Thomas.

### **God Save the King.**

If one should in these days  
Say to the children of men  
That they by their actions,  
Since they thus conduct themselves,  
Were not true Christians  
And did not know the truth;  
They would plague him  
And clutch him by the throat,  
Perhaps even beat him to death,  
Make themselves glow like sickles,  
Go forth in their wantonness  
And still be good Christians.

### *Germanton.*

The following news has been received from Frederick township in Falckner's Swamp. On the 12th of August, after nine o'clock in the evening, an Irishman came to the door of a man by the name of Buebner and asked to stay all night. The man of the house called a neighbor who could speak English, and because they suspected no good of the man, they directed him to an inn nearby. He soon came back, however, and said he could not find the house, and urged that

## The Sower Periodicals

they keep him over night, which they consented to do. The housewife took his horse, and as she was leading it to the field, some one struck her, so that she fell down as if dead. Then he threw her over the fence and cast a large block of wood on her, thinking she was dead because she lay so still. The other murderer, who was in the house, first struck down the feeble old neighbor with an instrument of death, which was made of iron in the form of a large knife, especially for the purpose of breaking into houses and beating people to death. The hilt was as large as a small fist, and it likewise struck the master of the house also, who was so terribly treated that his head and entire body were full of holes, bruises and blood. His mother, who was in the upper part of the house, is said to have cried out, as did also the man, murder! murder! so that a neighbor's child a half mile away heard them and called its father. He came running with another man who was in his house, and they on their way answered those who were crying for help.

The murderers were frightened by these loud cries and made their escape on their horses. In their haste they left behind their knives of murder and robbery already mentioned, which the neighbors found after they had come upon the people in their blood and wounds. The knives were taken to the justice, who has ordered the murderers to be pursued. Up to this time, however, nothing has been heard of them.

On the 21st of last July, an Englishman by the name of John Ward living near Anchocas, went out to shoot game. He noticed something stir in a thicket and saw the white breast of a man but thought it was the hind part of a deer. He fired and shot his neighbor, James Scherrein, dead upon the spot.

---

A piece of gold has been found in the street, which, without doubt, some one has lost. Whoever can de-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

scribe the correct distinguishing symbol in which it was wrapped, and what was with it, can have it again without cost from the publisher.

A man's coat has been found in the street between Philadelphia and Germantown. Whoever can give a correct description of it can have it again without cost from Christopher Sower.

It will be observed that the news was crisp and tersely expressed. The editor sought to give as much information as possible in a few words. The paper contained nine separate articles or items, and for the most part they were crowded together in such a way as to take as little space as possible. For instance, the editor's address to the reader was followed by an account of the European wars. This was probably intended as the leading article in the paper, yet it was crowded against the preceding without a title or any other indication of its nature or importance, (as above).

While this was an expedient to save space, as I take it, the little sheet was not made up without reference to the artistic. This is shown in the display and arrangement of the heading. In the governor's proclamation also, there is a palpable effort at artistic effect. Two large ornamental capitals are introduced here, one at the introduction and the other at the beginning of the proclamation proper. Other small capitals here contribute to the same result.

The admission of a bit of verse likewise may not have been without due consideration for its artistic effect. The general appearance of the paper throughout is characterized by neatness and good taste.

## The Sower Periodicals

In regard to the verses I should state that the translation is literal and is intended to convey the sense of the original and preserve the line, without aiming to be in any sense poetical. In the original the lines rhyme in tersets: the first three rhyme together, likewise the second three; the seventh, eighth, and ninth repeat the rhyme of the first three, and the last three repeat that of the fourth, fifth and sixth. The massing of thought throughout the stanza also produces a splendid climactic effect.

The last part of the paper, beginning with the account of the murder at Falckner's Swamp, is set in smaller type than the rest. The items are crowded together too without any break of any kind between them except the line which separates the last two items, the advertisements, from the rest of the paper. It would seem that the publisher had rather more news for the first issue of his paper than the little sheet could contain.

In this enterprise of launching a German newspaper in the American wilderness, Sower was prompted solely by a desire to be helpful to his countrymen. He was far from being willing to issue a newspaper in the ordinary sense of the word. He had little sympathy with the journalistic dogma later enunciated by Horace Greeley, that "the people want the news, not facts." Whatever they might want, he felt that as the collector and editor of news, it was his duty to give to the public only that which was true. His moral character strove against lending a hand to the spreading of unreliable

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

news, or furnishing reading matter for mere pastime.

A fuller statement of his policy than he had yet given out appeared in the first issue of the almanac, which was published in the autumn of the same year. "To those," he says, "who have frequently inquired, and in the future may still inquire, whether German newspapers are not soon to be had, to these we hereby make known that we are not at all disposed to waste our precious time in collecting every week something that is of no use, much less to write lies, as the common custom of the world is."

This statement is followed by his prospectus in which he outlines definitely his policy and plans as follows: "It is hereby made known that in future we intend to publish a collection of useful and important news and happenings, partly of a secular nature, whatever is to be learned at this time of wars and rumors of wars, from Europe as well as from other parts of the world, so far as true and reliable accounts can be obtained; also true and trustworthy religious news, as much as we think useful. . . . But we are not willing to bind ourselves absolutely to a fixed time when the paper shall be published. However it will probably appear four times a year; as, on the 16th of November, the 16th of February, the 16th of May, and the 16th of August, and the first issue now appears as an evidence."

Truly, great things from small beginnings grow. The timid editor would not be bound for any fixed number of issues of his paper, nor would he be re-

## The Sower Periodicals

stricted to a definite time of publication. In starting his infant enterprise he doubtless felt a responsibility and an uncertainty which it is impossible for us today fully to appreciate. The little Germantown newspaper which would "probably" appear every three months and "probably" about the middle of the month was the small beginning of that mighty factor in present-day American life—the German-American press.

But Sower had less reason to fear for the success of his enterprise than he suspected. He had planned better than he knew. His proposition to publish news of important events of the day in the German language and in German type met with so much encouragement that the *Hoch-Deutsch Geschicht-Schreiber* could afterwards appear monthly. Although projected as a quarterly, the paper appeared monthly from the beginning.

The price of subscription was three shillings (40 cents) the year. At first the subscribers had the privilege of having advertisements inserted free. In the second year of its history the paper was enlarged. Four years later (1745) the name was changed to *Hoch-Deutsche Pensylvanische Berichte oder Sammlung wichtiger Nachrichten aus dem Natur-und Kirchenreich*. The reason for the change from "Geschicht-Schreiber" (recorder of facts) to "Berichte" (reports) was explained in the January number of the next year. "We had hoped," wrote the editor, "to publish only real happenings, things that took place in the world of nature and in the church; but we could not do it. For this reason we dropped the title "Ges-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

chicht-Schreiber" some time ago and added instead "Berichte," for it has been found later at times that one or another of the items of news did not take place but was only reported or imagined."

During this same year (1746) "Hoch-Deutsch" was dropped from the title, and henceforth the paper purported only to be a disseminator of news, since facts could not always be obtained.

In 1749 the *Pensylvanische Berichte*, as the paper was now called, began to appear twice a month, the regular issue on the 16th and an extra on the 1st. The extra was not numbered and does not seem to have been issued every month. The paper had now run for ten years as a monthly and had become exceedingly popular. Its circulation had increased until 1751, when it reached four thousand. The next year (1752) the paper was increased in size from a quarto to a folio, and now appeared regularly twice a month.

In 1762 the name of the paper was changed the third time. The Second Christopher Sower, into whose hands the business had passed on the death of his father in 1758, was frequently troubled by the unreliable character of his news, much as his father had been before him. He made his position of editor and his consequent relation to his constituents a matter of conscientious regard. In spite of all his care news would sometimes appear in the paper which later turned out to be without foundation. He believed it to be due his readers, therefore, to prepare them beforehand for the appearance of the unavoidable errors, and not avow any absolute credulity in his news. In

## The Sower Periodicals

this respect he was even more scrupulous, as we see, than his father had been; and to free his conscience of any semblance of deception, he changed the title of his paper so as to read as follows: *Germantowner Zeitung oder Sammlung wahrscheinlicher Nachrichten aus dem Natur-und Kirchenreich, wie auch auf das gemeine Beste angesehene nützliche Unterrichte und Anmerkungen.* (Germantown Newspaper or a Collection of probable secular and religious news, also Instructions and Remarks considered useful for the common good).

This title the paper kept during the rest of its existence. The form and size, too, remained unchanged. In 1775, however, it began to appear weekly, and during the rest of its career it played the role of a weekly journal.

Throughout the entire history of the paper the original price of three shillings a year remained unchanged, notwithstanding the fact that the reader now received fifty-two papers instead of the original twelve, and that each of these was about three times as large as the original monthly sheet. How this could be done was explained by the publisher in a very original way and on grounds that would scarcely be justified by the managers of newspaper enterprises of our day. He explained that the increased cost was covered by the enlarged number of advertisements received, and that an honest man must not allow himself to be paid double.

How he managed the advertisement is shown by a communication to the public of May 1, 1755, in which

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

he says: "Whoever sends in an advertisement for his own profit, or a personal advertisement, (not very large) shall pay five shillings. If the thing for which he advertises is obtained after the first insertion, two shillings will be returned, if after the second insertion one shilling will be returned."

With all Sower's enterprise and excellent business methods, there was one class of persons with whom the dealings of both father and son were not of a strictly business nature. These were the delinquents on their mailing list. Towards them they were too kind to be just even to themselves, and their leniency was not always rewarded in the best manner. From time to time they took occasion to admonish these black sheep seriously, but always with such overflowing kindness that it took away the sting of reproach and made the reproof ineffective. The *Berichte* for April, 1759, contains a good example of their manner in such cases. "He who owes for three years and more and besides has no reputation, must not take it amiss if he receives a little notice." This, as will be seen from the date, was said by the second Christopher.

That he was pursuing the policy of his illustrious father, however, will be made clear by the following: When Gotthard Armbruster, formerly an apprentice to Sower, together with his brother Anton established a paper in Philadelphia, Sower called attention to the fact in his paper of May 16, 1748, in a friendly manner and added: "Sower only requests the dishonest, who have never yet paid him, that they do not treat this man so."

## The Sower Periodicals

In 1776 Christopher Sower the Second, who had been sole owner of the publishing plant since 1758 and had developed it immensely, associated with himself in the business his oldest son, Christopher the Third. The issue of the paper for July 3rd of this year came out in the firm name of "Christoph Saur und Sohn." It contained the following interesting announcement relative to the adoption by Congress on July 2nd, of the resolution which led two days later to the Declaration of Independence. "Yesterday the Continental Congress declared the United Colonies to be free, independent states."

Soon after this the father (Christopher the Second) seems to have withdrawn from the active management of the business and to have entrusted it to the hands of his son. For nearly a year after this the publications of the house bear the imprint of "Christoph Saur der Jüngere." The father's patriotism and his unflinching principles of non-resistance made the unsettled conditions of the time peculiarly trying to him, and he was doubtless glad to entrust his business to younger hands.

The following year the business was carried on under the name of "Christoph Saur der Jüngere und Peter Saur." The brothers, however, had fallen on an unpropitious time. The march of hostile armies and the ravages of war were present on every hand. A feeling of uncertainty had taken possession of the people. No one knew what the morrow would bring forth. To quiet the public in regard to their business the brothers found it expedient to publish early in

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1777 this assurance: "The newspaper will be issued every week by Christopher Sower, Junior, and Peter Sower."

A little later they found it necessary to move their establishment from Germantown to Philadelphia. In the edition of the paper for March 19, 1777, they gave notice that they had moved to a house adjoining the Quaker meetinghouse, and would continue the business there. (The Quaker meetinghouse was at the corner of Second and Market Streets).

This is the last issue of the *Germantauner Zeitung* of which I have been able to find any trace, and there is no particular reason for supposing that any were issued after this. A large part of the original printing plant at Germantown had already been destroyed or confiscated by the British troops, and the young men now in actual charge of the remnant of the business had turned loyalist and soon after started a paper in support of the British. This we shall notice separately in its proper place.

Thus the first German newspaper in America had a continuous existence of nearly forty years, and was edited successively by three generations of Christopher Sowers. Its influence in its day we can not now estimate or fully appreciate. The number of subscribers for the time was, as we have seen, considerable, reaching at the end of a dozen years a total of four thousand. Several years later the publisher complained that the number of copies to be printed made it difficult to issue the paper on time. Teamsters who had undertaken to distribute them along the country roads

## The Sower Periodicals

complained about the great number of papers to be delivered. Three hundred and thirty were distributed along the Conestoga road alone. And the circulation was by no means restricted to Pennsylvania. It had followed the tide of German emigrants down into the valleys of Maryland and Virginia, and had even penetrated as far south as the Carolinas and Georgia. There was perhaps not a German settlement of any consequence in this country to which one or more copies did not find their way.

To show the influence that Sower exercised over the German immigrants, chiefly through the agency of his paper, I may refer to an incident of the French and Indian War.

At the time this strife broke out, the German population of Pennsylvania had become quite numerous, and some of the leading English settlers of the province began to fear them and pretended to suspect their loyalty. It was even whispered that they meditated an alliance with the French, and were willing to abet the Indians in their savage attacks upon frontier settlements. How completely these suspicions falsified them has been abundantly proven by history. Through the entire struggle leading up to the Revolution and culminating in the independence of the colonies there was perhaps no class of people in America who stood more staunchly for their rights as citizens or were more loyal to the principles of liberty than the Germans.

Because of this suspicion and the rapidity with which the Germans were coming to this country, an

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

effort was made to restrict their rights and privileges. Sower came to their rescue in 1755 with a stirring pamphlet in which he exhorted them to stand by their rights as freemen. As the Germans trusted him completely as their leader and looked to him for guidance, the scheme failed.

The extent of his influence at this time is shown by the fact that a society was organized in Philadelphia for the express purpose of counteracting his influence. It was called "The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge among the Germans in Pennsylvania." Benjamin Franklin, Conrad Weiser, and Dr. Wm. Smith were among the prime movers in it. Having failed to betray the Germans into a forfeiture of their rights, this society now sought to win their confidence and rule them by moral suasion as Sower was doing. Accordingly it established a number of free schools among the German settlers in different parts of the province.

In 1755 the Board of Trustees of the Society decided to bring the war still closer, and meet Sower on his own ground. They resolved to set up a German press, and print a newspaper, an almanac and other popular works. To encourage this undertaking Franklin offered to sell to the Society his German printing outfit at considerably less than its real value. The purchase was effected, and the Rev. H. M. Mühlenberg, Sower's old antagonist, was offered the editorship. He saw reasons to decline, however, and another Lutheran pastor, Rev. J. F. Handshuh was put in charge.

But the project did not succeed. The paper and

## The Sower Periodicals

almanac could not supplant those issued by Sower. The paper was known as the *Philadelphia Zeitung*, etc. It ran to the latter part of 1757 when it failed, leaving Sower once more in undisputed possession of the field.

No complete file of the Sower papers is in existence. But thanks to the industry and the thoughtful appreciation of Abraham H. Cassel of Harleysville, Pennsylvania, the distinguished antiquary of the Dunker church, portions of the file have been preserved. These are from April 16, 1743, to November 1, 1751, and from January 16, 1754, to December 18, 1761. These are now the property of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and are preserved in the Society's library in Philadelphia, where I had the pleasure of examining them.

The paper referred to above, which the Sower brothers started in support of the British cause, was known as *Der Pennsylvanische Staats Courier, oder einlau-fende Wochentliche Nachrichten*.

It was promised that "This paper will be issued every week by Christopher Sower, Jr., and Peter Sower in Second Street." It began to appear at once after the occupation of Philadelphia by Howe's army in the latter part of September, 1777. It circulated chiefly among the Hessian troops, who formed a considerable portion of the invading army. The Germans, as a rule, remained loyal to the American cause. The paper ran until the next summer, when it came to an abrupt close by the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British troops, June 18, 1778. The editors left Phila-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

delphia with the British army, remaining true to their allegiance to the King.

After the Revolution, Christopher (the 3rd) settled at St. Johns, New Brunswick, where he founded and published *The Royal Gazette* and later became Deputy Postmaster General of Nova Scotia. Peter accompanied his brother to New Brunswick, but later studied medicine, and practiced his profession in the British West Indies, where he also held a position under the Government.

### *II. Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

One of the early works to appear from the Sower press was an almanac with the above title. As this was a calendar for 1739, it must have appeared late in the preceding year. In a letter written from Germantown, November 17, 1738, Sower first gave notice of his intention to issue an almanac. Sometime between this date, therefore, and the end of the calendar year, which in 1738 was on March 24, marks the appearance of the first issue.

There were probably several considerations that led the printer to his determination to issue an almanac. He intimates in the letter referred to above that he intended it as an advertising medium. He states that he knew of no more suitable vehicle for making known, throughout the length and breadth of the land, the fact that he had established a German printing-press at Germantown, than an almanac, and he mentions at the same time the title under which it shall appear.

## The Sower Periodicals

It has been thought also that he was influenced in this matter largely by the solicitations of his friends and neighbors; and this may have had its bearing. It is apparent, however, that he was influenced more by his desire to reach the people than by any claims that they made upon him.

One thing that doubtless operated with weight in his decision was the unsettled condition of the calendar at that time. So chaotic had this become that it was almost impossible to tell with certainty, not only the days of the month, but even the days of the week. Numerous instances are on record of the non-observance of the Sabbath among the most devout Christians, because they did not know when Sunday came.

A case is mentioned of a very pious lady who was a member of the German Reformed church. She was always at her place in the religious services and took a leading part in the various lines of church work. But one Sunday she was missed from the service, and one of her friends went to investigate the cause. To her great surprise she found her pious friend busily engaged at the wash tub. And what must have been the good woman's astonishment and mortification when told it was Sunday?

An experience of Rev. Mr. Rittenhouse of that day is also to the point. As he emerged from a piece of woodland one Sunday morning on his way to church, he was surprised to see some of his parishioners busily engaged in hauling hay. He rode up to remonstrate with them and reprove them for their want of piety,

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

and was further surprised to learn that they did not know it was the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

This confusion of dates, moreover, was not confined to the more ignorant classes in the rural districts. In the towns and cities also, and among all classes of people, errors were constantly committed. When a provincial council, to consist of many of the leading citizens of Pennsylvania, was called at Philadelphia in 1734, the time of meeting, as understood by the different members, varied as much as ten days. Some of the members arrived a week before the appointed date and a few of them not until several days after it was past.

Since Christopher Sower's chief purpose in life was to be helpful to his fellow-men, we are not surprised that he determined early in his career as publisher to lend his aid in clearing up this confusion and in bringing some sort of system into the calendar. And of all his many publications, it may be questioned whether any had greater direct practical bearing upon the everyday affairs of the people than this simple almanac.

The first issue contained 24 quarto pages, 8 x 7  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches and was without covers. Besides a calendar for each month, it contained the phases of the sun and moon, the aspects of the planets, the principal constellations, together with the brightest stars, and other information of the nature usually found in almanacs nowadays. Those for the next several years differed little from this one.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Magazine, Vol. 6.

## The Sower Periodicals

But in 1743 the almanac was enlarged to 32 pages, and was provided with an emblematical engraved plate for a cover. The design of this cut contained a flying angel with a wand in one hand and a scroll in the other. The angel comes in a storm that rages over a city, while at the same time away off in the distance the rainbow of promise descends in its graceful curve to the earth. A fisherboy is just landing from a billowy ocean with his catch, while two men stand on the landing engaged in an intimate discussion. A dog standing by is the only creature that seems to be entirely composed. A large sailing vessel floating the English flag rides gracefully at anchor near the shore.

The scroll contained a legend engraved in it, which was changed from time to time. "Krieg und Kriegs-Geschrey," "Kummerliche Zeiten," and "Hoffnung bessere Zeiten," were some of the forms it took. The whole design is highly emblematical, and is an interesting study. The interpretation, however, will depend to a certain extent upon the individuality of each student.

This plate was used throughout the series. It was touched up and slightly changed several times, but its leading features were left unaltered. In the later form a sinking sun was added, which in the earlier forms, had been hidden by the storm-clouds.

An interesting fact may be mentioned here in connection with the later history of this plate. When the Sower printing establishment was broken up during the Revolutionary war and the effects sold, Colonel Bull of the English army appropriated this plate as a

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

part of his share of the booty. He later bartered it away to John Dunlap, a printer of Philadelphia, who in turn disposed of it to Peter Leibert, a minister of the Dunker church. Leibert bought most of the confiscated Sower establishment at the sale, with which he began a publishing business after the close of the war. He printed an almanac from this plate in 1784 and the following years. Later the plate passed into the hands of his son-in-law, Michael Billmeyer, by whom it was used as late as 1835.

From 1743 to 1748 the almanac contained 32 pages. From 1748 to 1750, 36 pages. These extra four pages were filled chiefly with medical advice. The 1750 issue contained 40 pages, and the medical information was accordingly increased. This was so highly prized by the poor country people that the next year the publisher added eight pages more. This size (48 pages including the covers) was unchanged during the rest of its career.

In 1748 the almanac was printed in colors. Editions printed in Germany in this style had been imported in great numbers for several years, and to hold his trade Sower had to meet this competition. He explains in his advertisement of this colored edition that he brought it out in compliance with many urgent requests for such an almanac. Necessarily it had to be sold higher than the regular edition, and this caused dissatisfaction.

The next year he printed two editions also. The plain one he sold for nine pence, the former price, and the colored one for a shilling. But this made extra

## The Sower Periodicals

work and trouble and was not satisfactory in the end. So the next year he printed only the plain edition, and sold it at the original price. This he continued to do until 1753, when he printed another colored edition, the last one he issued.

In 1751, while working on the almanac for the next year, he received information that the British parliament was about to pass an act to correct the calendar and change the beginning of the year. He therefore delayed publication until a copy of the act could reach America. Before this the year had begun on March 25, instead of January 1, as at present. In the meantime the calendar had fallen eleven days behind true solar time.

Although the act had been signed by the King on Wednesday, May 22, it had not yet reached this country by the 1st of October, and Sower lamented that nothing could be done at the almanac, while he was kept in suspense for the arrival of the Act to know what changes were to be made. As the end of the year came nearer, he did not trust to put off the printing any longer, so he proceeded to press with his matter and had scarcely finished running off the edition when the act arrived. It was too late for insertion in the almanac, so he printed it in a double number of his paper for October 16 of the same year.

The Act provided for the dropping of eleven days after September the 2nd, numbering the 3rd, the 14th, and so on, giving September 19 days instead of 30, and making the year consist of only 354 days instead of 365.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

These changes had been ordered by Pope Gregory in the latter part of the 16th century, but the Protestant nations had been slow to accept them, as savoring of popery. Even at that late date many persons in England and America preferred not to use the corrections, and so maintain their independence of the Pope. We see, however, that Sower was eager to take advantage of them and give them to the people, as he saw how they would simplify the calendar and bring the seasons and the solar year into uniformity.

Of course these corrections were not understood by the people generally. If they had understood the nature of them they would probably have resented their use, as an attempt to meddle with an institution in which they had complete confidence. But as they did not understand them they accepted the changes without question, assuming that the man who could make the weather could also drop eleven days from the year with impunity.

The people generally had complete confidence in the almanac, or weather book as they called it. They looked upon it as infallible, and planned their work according to its predictions. There are many stories illustrative of this. I may choose one related by Abram H. Cassel several years ago in an article printed in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. VI.

A man by the name of Walker from above Sumneytown had business in Philadelphia. He consulted Sower's almanac and found that it promised fair weather. He therefore loaded his wagon and started.

## The Sower Periodicals

When he had gotten well on the way it began to rain. It rained harder and harder until finally he and his load of produce were thoroughly drenched. He became very angry, and lost faith in the weather book and the man that made it. In this mood he approached Germantown. He stopped in front of the printing office, called Sower out and gave him a severe reprimand. After hearing him through patiently Sower replied kindly, "O friend, friend, be not so angry, for although it was I that made the almanac, the Lord God made the weather." The man caught something of the kindly spirit of the editor and went away better satisfied.

On another occasion, it is said, a man had occasion to make a journey of some distance in the fall of the year. Consulting his almanac, he found that it promised fair weather. So he started without his overcoat. After a while it turned cold and rainy. He too lost his temper, accused Sower of printing lies and stopped to give him a tongue lashing. Having heard his tirade, Sower said to him: "Well, friend, as you were so disappointed, I will give you a piece of good advice gratuitously, and if you follow it you will not have occasion to blame me so soon again. It is this. Always take your overcoat along when you leave home by fair weather—when it is foul you may do as you like. By following this advice you will never be disappointed, and will have no occasion to blame me hereafter."

Because of these and other misunderstandings, Sower explained in a later number the purpose and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

use of an almanac. He explained the precaution he had taken to be accurate, but showed at the same time that it was impossible to make an almanac that would be free from inaccuracies.

In order that I may make as clear as possible the nature of these almanacs, I will describe the contents of one chosen at random. Let it be the one for 1760. This was issued about two years after the death of the first Sower. The first 18 pages are occupied with the calendar for each month, the sun and moon phases, and so forth. Then follow 26 pages of reading matter, covering a broad range of subjects and containing a great variety of interest.

This part opens with a brief statement in regard to the eclipses for the year. Then follows an account of the courts and court days for Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Maryland. The information in regard to each is detailed and specific. It fills about six pages. The next eleven pages are taken up with an Abstract of an instructive Dialogue between Lord Rich and Mr. Poor. It purports to be a translation from the English, and has for its object to show that "neither riches nor poverty, but godliness makes people happy." The discussion is carried forward under twelve chief points. This is followed by a "Receipt for making various sorts of wine": cherry wine, blackberry wine. Next is "A short account of the uses of cotton." Then comes "Various good receipts for horses," which is followed by still other "Receipts for people who are well, so as to stay well." All this fills some five pages.

## The Sower Periodicals

The last article, about four pages in length, is an essay on "War and Peace."

The almanac for 1761 contains an article on General Wolfe, the hero of the French and Indian War, together with a portrait. The article is translated from a London magazine. This number of the almanac, although it was the largest yet issued, was so much in demand that the edition was soon exhausted, and Sower advertised in several newspapers requesting that if any store-keeper or peddler had more on hand than he had prospect of selling, he would thank him to return them and get his money back.

The practical information the editor was bringing together in the almanac from year to year, made each succeeding issue more popular than its predecessor. In 1762 he began the "Krauterbuch," a description of the virtues and properties of the most celebrated herbs and roots. In indicating his purpose in this work, he suggests, "If one will only keep these almanacs together, he will eventually have a little herb book at a small cost."

The work was carefully planned. It was intended to be simple and practical and at the same time thorough-going. He began in regular order a description of the medicinal plants, giving their German, English and Latin names. He explains their characteristics and medical properties, with specific directions as to their uses and the way to prepare them for the different diseases. He avoids technical terms, but explains everything in such simple, concrete language that the most ignorant can understand it.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

This matter formed an important installment of each almanac from 1762 to 1777, when it was completed. It was now furnished with an index, referring to the number of the almanac in which each plant was treated. Those who had acted upon the editor's suggestion and had kept their almanacs together, now had a little herb book of positive worth.

As an example of his method in this work, I have selected a plant that is at the same time well known to everybody and briefly treated by the author. This will give a fair idea of his usual method of treatment.

### *Sassafras, Eng. Sassafras, Lat. Sassafras.*

"The root of the sassafras tree is very useful, and the bark of the root is, for its medical properties, one of the most extensively used herbs that grow. It has the virtue of being able to dry up all the fluids of the system, to purify the blood, to sweeten the profuse saline humors, and drive them off through the skin and perspiration, and especially to purge the Gallo-mania or French Pox from the blood.

"From this root almost all sorts of remedies may be prepared. If a good, sweat-producing decoction of herbs is desired, take sarsaparilla root, pounded pock-wood, China root, bark of sassafras root, one and one-fourth ounces each; Hungarian antimony one ounce; rosin two ounces; fennel seed and cinnamon each a quarter ounce. Cut and pound all together, put into an earthen, tin, or glass vessel, pour a gallon or more of spring or rain water on it, cover up the vessel and let it boil for several hours; then draw off and give it

## The Sower Periodicals

warm to the patient to drink, one or one and a half cups each morning and evening.

"This drink will drive off all the acrid salty humors through the perspiration and stools. It improves the blood, serves to dry up and heal sores of long standing, and replaces them with good, sound flesh, and it promotes the regular circulation of the blood."

In 1763 another series was begun. This the author called Revised History of England. Some eight or nine pages of each issue were given to it. The history was given in rather copious outline to the Reformation, then in greater fullness to the reign of William and Mary. It was the author's purpose to go more and more into details as he approached the present. But the destruction of his establishment in 1777 brought the series to an abrupt close, and left the history unfinished. It, too, had been exceedingly popular with the readers of the almanac.

Other ways of helping and instructing the people were also found. Simple business transactions were explained and commented upon. At one time the editor gave examples of promissory notes, and showed how to sign them and endorse them. He also showed how a joint note should be drawn and signed. Examples of receipts were likewise given and their purpose explained.

In another number deeds, contracts and so forth were treated. Illustrative examples of the different kinds of deeds were given. Bonds of apprenticeship, and arbitration bonds were explained and illustrated. Wills were treated likewise.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

In still another issue there were specimen pages of the letters of the alphabet, both capitals and small letters, which were intended as a copy from which children and others might learn to write.

Thus in almost every conceivable way Sower exerted himself to fill his almanac from year to year with a fund of useful information that should be helpful to his less fortunate brothers.

He did not lose sight, however, of the artistic. In general plan and make-up, the exercise of good taste is everywhere to be observed. Illustrations are frequently inserted, which was something unusual for that day. The issue for 1762 contained two illustrations, a sketch, or general view of the city of Montreal in Canada, and a portrait of Charles Frederick III., King of Prussia.

The Sower almanacs had an unprecedented sale. They were so popular that all competitors were driven from the field. They were sold throughout the German colonies and as far south as the Carolinas and Georgia. Almost every year the edition was enlarged, and yet the editor frequently failed to have enough to supply the demand. We have seen the condition in 1761, and how he endeavored to call in any copies that were not finding ready sale. Situations similar to this seem to have occurred frequently.

Because of the wonderful vogue of Sower's almanac we should not infer that it was without competitors. Franklin published a German almanac as early as 1748, but soon discontinued it, as there was no demand for it. Armbruster brought out one, too, about the

## The Sower Periodicals

same time, but soon withdrew it for the same reason. Heinrich Miller began a similar publication in 1762, with but little better success. In 1771 the Ephrata Brotherhood began to issue a German almanac, and in 1775 Francis Baily began a similar enterprise. None of them succeeded to any appreciable extent, however, until after the Revolution, when German almanacs became numerous.

### *III. Geistliches Magazien.*

If the Sower newspaper and almanacs have their peculiar interest and appear to us as being unusual for their day, the Sower magazine is certainly no less so. The first two were the work of the first Sower, projected and established by him, and later enlarged and developed by his son. The magazine is the work of the younger man, and was brought into being only some five or six years after his illustrious father had been in his grave.

In the way of originality this third venture was no less characteristic than the first two had been. Even more distinctly than they, the magazine was a pioneer. The newspaper and the almanac were the first in their respective fields in German type. The magazine was more than this: it was one of the first magazines of any kind to appear in the American Colonies.

It is a singular fact that the first periodical of this kind in the English Colonies of the New World should be out and out German. The German immigrants constituted but a comparatively small proportion of our scattered population at the close of the French and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Indian War. Most of them, moreover, were exceedingly poor, and many of them had been almost entirely without educational opportunities. They were prevailingly of the peasant class, and so straitened were the circumstances of some of them that they were compelled to sell themselves into servitude for a period of time to pay for their transportation.

This, however, is the clientele for whom the first magazine in the New World was projected. Certainly the prospect was not very auspicious. Yet there was something in the conditions and in the attendant circumstances that led the noble-hearted editor to undertake the project.

He saw his fellow-countrymen in a new environment, in a situation in which they would be led to think especially of their material surroundings. They were largely an agricultural people, so circumstanced that they had literally to hew their farms out of a veritable wilderness. Their houses had to be erected "from the stump," and almost every article of household furniture and implement for the farm was the product of their own unskilled hands. Life was terribly grim and earnest to them, and there was danger that the spiritual side of their nature would be wholly dwarfed.

Sower saw this condition. His heart had often been moved, he tells us, when he observed the ignorance and carelessness of the people generally in regard to religious matters; and he thought this condition of things prevailed, either because the people had no desire to receive religious instruction or had no oppor-

## The Sower Periodicals

tunity for doing so. He complains that when people listen to an instructive discourse or sermon, the mind is often so ill-prepared to receive what is heard that the message is forgotten before the person reaches home.

Religious books, too, he observes, are very scarce among the people if not entirely wanting. Either the people are very poor, or they spend their money for other things than religious books. Even if one occasionally buys a book of this kind, it is a long time before he reads many pages of it; he generally lays it aside before he has read it half through.

The observance of these things had often saddened the good man's heart, and he had considered how he could remedy the unfortunate situation. It occurred to him that if some brief religious publication, terse and to the point, were put into the hands of the people without cost, perhaps many of them would take time enough to read half a page carefully, and in doing so, would probably be impressed so that they would think of it further. They might also become really interested in it, and in that case, they would read it through at another time and would probably receive more good than from the former reading. If then at a later time another such religious tract should come into their hands, they would repeat these operations.

This was the line of reasoning by which Sower arrived at the conclusion that he would publish a magazine. We see that his purpose was wholly charitable. At his own individual cost he would produce a publication that should contain wholesome moral and re-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ligious instruction and distribute it gratuitously among the people, with the hope that it might arrest some one's attention and lead him to think upon his ways.

Just when he arrived at this conclusion, we have no way of knowing, but he assures us that when he sent forth the first issue this had been his determination for a considerable time; and he naively adds: "but as every good undertaking under heaven now and then has its hindrances, so has it happened also in this case, and it has been prevented from time to time."

Finally an event occurred of which we have definite knowledge that seems to have transformed this pious purpose into action, and incidentally it fixes for us the approximate date of the first issue. Continuing in his preface he says: "As I had now completed the great work of printing the Bible so fortunately, and under peculiarly favorable circumstances, it seemed to me that it was my highest obligation, in recognition of God's favor, not to put off this good intention any further; especially when I remembered that the original purpose of establishing this printing-press was for the honor of God and the good of mankind; and that God has brought me into the world and has allowed me to live, like all other men, for no other purpose than that I would seek his honor and try to serve my neighbor in every possible way. So I am now making a beginning by issuing such a little magazine as I have spoken of."

It is known that the edition of the Bible here referred to came from Sower's press late in the year 1763. As the whole edition seems to have been printed and

## The Sower Periodicals

bound with considerable dispatch, it is altogether probable that some time during the following year witnessed the appearance of the magazine.

So the *Geistliches Magazine* was a sort of thank-offering for the success with which Sower had been enabled to bring forth the second edition of the Bible.

In order that his purpose might not be misunderstood, and to free himself from suspicion of seeking gain from the enterprise, he assures the public that the magazines are to be given away and his sole object in issuing the little journal is the good of his fellow-men.

Although the magazine was a voluntary contribution to the public, growing out of philanthropic motives, yet the publisher refused to be bound to any definite time of issue, but warned his readers that he would "proceed with it as the materials come to hand and as the time and circumstances permit." This policy seems to have been adhered to. It does not appear that there was a fixed time of issue, or that the successive numbers appeared at regular intervals.

He is careful also to assure the public that he expects no honor from the enterprise. As an evidence of this he assures them that he shall not use the journal to market his own wares, but that he will "busy himself in making instructive extracts from all sorts of writings both ancient and modern, and from the English as well as from the German, such as shall be useful and edifying to all men." He does not forget to add in parenthesis, however, that in case he should deem some of his own composition better suited to his purpose than the writings of others, he would not hes-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

itate to accord to himself the same privileges granted to others.

He invites his readers to send in contributions for the magazine, in keeping with his purpose as he has defined it. He warns them, however, that all matter must be strictly in accordance with the Word of God.

Such is the plan and policy of the magazine as explained in the preface to the first issue. In summarizing his policy the publisher observes reflectively: "Truth always carries with it the preserving power of salt, and when it comes in contact with a wound of sin, it irritates it, but it also heals him who uses it aright. The work now in hand is a magazine in which all sorts of things are to be found: admonitions, corrections, edifying epistles, biographical sketches of persons divinely blessed, instructive occurrences, and whatever else can avail for the honor of God and the service of mankind."

With this high purpose as his goal, the indefatigable editor set about to accomplish it by means of a very modest little journal. After the first issue the copies of the magazine consisted of eight duodecimo pages each, without covers. The first number was twice as large. It comprised, besides the title page and its reverse, a Vorrede or address to the kind reader, which serves as an introduction to the whole series. This fills four pages. The last ten pages are given to the usual magazine matter.

The title runs thus: *Ein Geistliches Magazien, Oder: Aus dem Schatzen der Schriftgelehrten zum Himmelreich gelehrt, dargereichtes Altes und Neues.*

## The Sower Periodicals

(Translation) A Religious Magazine, or Old and New Things brought forth from the Treasures of Theologians learned in Heavenly Wisdom.

In all sixty-four numbers were printed in two series, running from about 1764 to 1772. These series will be considered separately. The first contains fifty numbers, and they are undated, so there is no way to fix with positive certainty the time of their appearance. The whole series is, however, numbered and paged consecutively, and they are of uniform size and appearance. The pages are usually printed in double columns, although this is not without exception. Generally the pages are completely filled, and not infrequently finer type is used at the close so as to complete the last article.

We have seen that it was the purpose of the editor to fill his pages with gleanings from the moral treatises of great writers, ancient and modern, and in this way to give his readers the best that had been written. It may be interesting to know some of the works from which he drew. The first to be brought under contribution was William Law's "Earnest Call to a Thoughtful and Holy Life." Selections from this work fill the first four numbers. Numbers eight to thirteen are made up of stories and selections from "The Life of John Engelbright." Several numbers are filled from the "Geistliche Fama." Number thirty-three contains "A copy of a writing, which Schoolmaster Christopher Dock had written out of Love to his Scholars who were still living, for their Edification and advice." Numbers thirty-one and thirty-two contain discourses,

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

prayers and observations of the Rev. Andrew Rivet, translated instructions in regard to bringing up children. Numerous examples of pious children and so forth are taken from a "Child's Book" by Jacob Janneyways. Numbers thirty-four and thirty-six are made up of poems by the second Alexander Mack. Number 34 contains two poems, one on the "Correct Practice of Internal and External Worship," and the other on "Real and Imagined Freedom." Number 36 consists of 55 eight-line stanzas on "Admonition against Suicide, and the Importance of Life." Other numbers contain expositions of scriptural passages, as for example Number 6. The first part of Number 5 is of the same nature and purports to be a contribution by Johannes Einfältig (John Simpleton). This number concludes with a poem entitled "Of The Love of Christ." The poem consists of eleven stanzas of ten lines each, rhyming in couplets, except the first four lines which rhyme alternately. In all these poems the poetic structure is observed. Not so, however, with Number 17. This issue, like Number 5, contains both prose and poetry. The first six pages of this number are given to a poem of 57 stanzas on "Instructive Nocturnal Prayers or an Earnest Consideration of Eternity." The singular thing about this is, that the stanzas are not printed as poetry, but as prose verses. The stanzas contain seven lines each, and the poetry seems to be of a high order. The prose article on the last two pages of this number is entitled "Afterthought," and furnishes one of the few instances of pages printed solid, without division into columns.

## The Sower Periodicals

This is probably enough to give a sufficiently clear idea of the general make-up and appearance of the first volume of these interesting publications. To show their tone and spirit I may quote one of the short stories from the *Kinder-Buch* of Jacob Janneyways, found in Number 28.

Tabitha Alder, a pious daughter of a clergyman in England, on being taken ill at the age of between seven and eight years, was asked what she thought would become of her if she should die. Her answer was that she greatly feared that she would be lost, because she was fearful that she did not love God. When questioned further as to how she knew that she did not love God, she answered: "What have I done for God since I have been born? Those who love God keep his commands, but I have not kept any of them."

She was asked if she would not like to love God. She replied, "Yes, from the bottom of my heart, if I only could." She was told to pray to God for a heart to love him; but she said she feared it was too late. She was greatly grieved, however, because she could not love God.

One of her friends who saw her in this sad condition and fasted and prayed to God for her, asked her afterwards how she was. She replied to him with great joy, saying she now praised the Lord that she could love the Lord Jesus heartily, and she felt that she did love him. "O," she said, "I love him very much! Praised be God for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, I shall soon be with Jesus; he is my husband and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

I am his bride; I have given myself up to him, and he has given himself to me; I will live with him forever."

Of course one short extract can go only a short way in reflecting the varied interest found in the magazine. The range of appeal in its pages is broad, going out to all classes of people. The spirit of the articles is prevailingly kind. The editor seeks rather to win his readers to the ways of right than to drive them. The charitable spirit that conceived and carried forward the worthy enterprise is everywhere present in its pages.

The number of copies printed at each issue of the magazine we have no way of knowing. But as they were printed for gratuitous distribution and were sent to the subscribers of Sower's paper, the number was probably determined largely by the size of that subscription list. A dozen years before the appearance of the magazine, the newspaper had a circulation of four thousand copies. What the number was in 1764 we are nowhere told, but it was probably somewhat larger. It is probable, therefore, that the number sent out at each issue of the magazine was something like five thousand.

Whether this estimate be correct or not, it is certain that within the century and a half, nearly, since they appeared the copies of this first volume have become exceedingly scarce and valuable. The Pennsylvania Historical Society has a complete set of them, as does also Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania State Library at Harrisburg. The library of the German Society, Philadelphia, has the first

## The Sower Periodicals

37 numbers bound together in a neat volume, and other sets more or less complete are to be found.

Rare and valuable as are these copies of the first volume of the magazine, they are after all relatively common when compared with the second volume. That a second volume ever existed does not seem to have been known by any of the authorities on the subject. Seidensticker, Hildeburn, Evans, Sabin—none of them make mention of a second volume; and it has likewise escaped the notice of later writers, such as Brumbaugh and Sachse. Oddly enough, however, Evans remarks, "No. 12 contains a poem by Alexander Mack, printed with the first German types in America, which were made in Germantown." Sachse iterates this statement. How Evans got this information, if he does not even know of the existence of a second volume, is hard to explain.

Volume II contains only fourteen numbers, though by an evident oversight of the printer, the issue following number 13 is numbered 15. That this is an error is shown by the paging, which is continuous. The pages of this volume run from 1 to 160. Nearly half of the issues of this second series are double numbers, as is shown by the fact that fourteen numbers fill 160 pages. The regular numbers contain only eight pages.

In general appearance the second volume is like the first. The title page is the same except that the word "Geistliches" is printed in slightly smaller type and with an unornamented "G." The woodcut ornament near the bottom of the page is replaced by the words "Zweiter Theil" between two lines extending across

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the page. Unlike the first volume, the second bears a date, 1770. This is of course the year when the series began. It probably extended over some two years. The size of the pages and their general appearance are the same as the first volume.

The contents, too, are in no characteristic way different from those of the first series. One number, however, deserves a little separate notice. This is number twelve. We have seen that two numbers of the first volume were filled with poems by Alexander Mack, Jr. Number 12 of the second volume was likewise filled from his pen. This number is made up of a poem entitled *Reim-gedicht vor die Liebe Jugend*. The poem contains one hundred stanzas, but is printed as prose in double columns. Each stanza thus forms a sort of verse and is printed like a paragraph. A peculiarity appears in the numbering. On the first four pages the numbers are placed in the middle of the columns, on the last four pages they stand at the upper right corner of each paragraph. A note at the end of the number says, "Printed with the first type that has ever been cast in America." Mr. Norman D. Gray of the Pennsylvania State Library, in speaking of this type, writes: "It is of a plain good face and Pica size, or perhaps a trifle larger, and gives No. 12 quite an air of distinction amongst its fellows."<sup>1</sup>

Only one copy of this second volume is known to exist. This is now the property of the Pennsylvania

---

<sup>1</sup> In a recent letter to the author. I am under obligations to Mr. Gray for much of the information here given in regard to the second volume.

## The Sower Periodicals

State Library at Harrisburg. It was purchased several years ago at the sale of Judge Samuel W. Pennypacker's library in Philadelphia. Judge Pennypacker had also a copy of the first volume. The State Library secured the two volumes, the only complete set in existence, so far as known.

The fourteenth number of the second volume (numbered 15) is the last issue of which there is any record and there is no particular reason for thinking that any were issued after this. It seems probable, although there is no direct evidence to prove it, that these later numbers succeeded each other at somewhat greater intervals than the earlier ones had done. It is likely, therefore, that this last number came from the press sometime in the year 1772, some eight years after the magazine had been started. Whether the printer became tired of the enterprise, or looked upon it as a failure, or for some other reason brought the series to a close we have no way of knowing.

The *Geistliches Magazien* is an honor to American journalism, and especially to the Brethren church. Through it the Dunkers became the first exponents of religious truth in the new world through the agency of the printing-press. While the magazine was in no sense sectarian, it maintained a high standard of morality and Christian living, and so fixed an ideal for the religious journalism that was to follow.

### *Reorganization of the Sower Printing Business.*

Six years after the famous Sower printing establishment had come to an untimely close, an enterprise was

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

started in Philadelphia, which may be regarded as a reorganization of the Sower press. Following the peace treaties of 1783, the wreck of the original Germantown plant, which had been confiscated, was put upon the market and the most of what was still usable was bought by Peter Leibert and his son-in-law, Michael Billmeyer. With this equipment they opened a printing house in Germantown in 1784 and undertook to resuscitate the Sower periodicals and in other ways to follow in the steps of their predecessors. Leibert was a minister in the German Baptist church, and Billmeyer was a Lutheran; so long as Leibert remained at the head of the enterprise the business naturally forms a part of the present history.

Near the end of this year (1784) they issued "*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender*" for the next year. It was a quarto and contained forty pages. It resembled in every respect those printed by the Sowers. While they retained the name, form and make-up of the original, they began them as a new series. This issue was marked "*Zum Erstenmal herangsgegeben.*" The almanacs were published each year in this same form to the end of the time with which our history is concerned.

The next year *Die Germantauer Zeitung* again made its appearance. It was now a folio sheet 16 x 9 1-2 inches and the price was raised to five shillings. The first issue contained the announcement that "This paper will be issued every fourteen days on Tuesday afternoon." The first number of this new series bears

## The Sower Periodicals

date of February 8, 1785. It appeared fortnightly until July 20, 1790, when it became a weekly.

It was a popular and influential journal from the beginning of its new career, its former prestige having much to do doubtless with bringing it into speedy favor. The Pennsylvania Legislature selected it as the medium of making public its proceedings, a favor which Melchior Steiner, the publisher of the *Gemeinnützige Philadelphische Correspondenz*, complained of on the ground that Leibert and Billmeyer had not supported the cause of the Republic during the Revolution. How long it existed has not been ascertained. It had a wide circulation, being sold by agents in Philadelphia, Middletown, York, Hanover, Lebanon, Litsz, Reading, Kutztown, Emans, Allentown, Easton, New Germantown, N. J., Albany and New York. In the latter city it had a hundred and sixty subscribers.<sup>1</sup>

The partnership of Leibert and Billmeyer was dissolved in August, 1787. Billmeyer continued the business at the old stand, while Leibert began an independent career on his own behalf. In the allotment the periodicals fell to Billmeyer and for this reason pass with the separation beyond the sphere of the present history.

Leibert remained in Germantown, where he opened a new printing office and book-bindery the next year. Here he gave his entire time to book-making and job work. The fact that he did not enter the field of journalism is probably due to the terms of agreement

---

<sup>1</sup> Seidensticker's First Century of German Printing in America.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

on which the former partnership had been dissolved. I have found publications bearing his imprint as late as 1797, but since he did not publish a periodical his later career does not form a part of this history.

## CHAPTER V.

### WRITERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

We have seen something of the work of the celebrated Sower press and of the stalwart and godly men who established and conducted it. By means of this press Germantown became not only the religious but also the literary center of the Dunkers in America during the period we are treating. About this center were gathered many men in the early days of the church. Under the stimulating influence of the Sowers a distinct literary atmosphere grew up in the little rustic village, and not a few of the Brethren assembled here gave expression in literary form to one or another of the problems or questions of the day that engaged their attention.

Many of them were men of culture and scholarship. That any of them, however, were finished scholars or graduates from any of the leading universities of the time, as has been too positively insisted upon, may well be doubted. They were earnest, thoughtful, practical men, who had to face stern facts and harsh realities, and to them life was a very intense and serious matter. When they wrote they wrote because they had something to say; and the bulk of their writing is characterized by an earnest, sincere, rugged directness that gives it positive aim, and directs it to some definite mark.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

I should not like to leave the impression, however, that their work is devoid of literary merit. It is a distinct merit that it has definite direction given it, and that it reaches a determined object. Of the finer literary graces and the higher qualities of style much of it is entirely wanting, if one may trust his judgment of a foreign language. Often the themes are less literary than practical in their nature, and less effort is expended in saying things beautifully than in saying them forcibly.

It is scarcely possible for us to appreciate today the full significance of this early literary work among the Brethren. The first two Christopher Sowers were probably the most powerful men in the early days of the Dunker church, and it was by means of their printing-press that they gained and exercised this power. They stood fearlessly in defense of any cause they espoused, and were ever ready to take up any cause that looked to the improvement of the condition of their fellow-countrymen. In return for this disinterested service they enjoyed their almost universal confidence and esteem.

They advocated the principles of the Dunker faith and made them known and respected. Their exemplary lives proved their sincerity in what they did and attracted the favorable consideration of thoughtful people. The Sower press was one of the most influential in America in that day, and had the effect of bringing the Brethren church into the very forefront of public attention. The church pursued a liberal and aggressive policy. Relatively it acquired a power and

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

prestige in the land that it lost after the Revolutionary war and which it has probably not regained to this day.

This was a prosperous period of the church. It numbered among its members men of influence and power. Some of them were gifted speakers, others were fluent, if not brilliant writers, and not a few of them both spoke and wrote with decided force and considerable ease.

Those who contributed in any important way to the literary work of the period will now be considered. Along with biographical and historical matter, which will be given as briefly as possible, illustrative extracts will in most instances be inserted, as seems expedient. These will serve to introduce us to the subject matter treated by these early fathers of the church, and at the same time give us some idea of their power as writers and of their literary style.

### *Alexander Mack, Sr.*

At the head of the religious movement that resulted in the organization of the Dunker church stands Alexander Mack. And a fearless, resolute man he was. In the midst of conflicting opinions and violent religious discussions he stood resolute and calm. At a time when others hesitated and wavered, when strong men were swept off their feet by the billows of doubt and persecution and uncertainty, he remained a very monument of strength. He seems to have seen more clearly than most of the men of his time through the confusion and turmoil that obscured

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the vision of so many of his contemporaries. Of all the great leaders that those troublous times brought forth none perceived more clearly than he the line of cleavage between truth and falsehood, and none followed the path of duty more consistently.

Alexander Mack was born at Schreisheim in the Palatinate, Upper Germany, in 1679. He seems to have descended from an influential and wealthy family, although but little is known of his ancestry. He inherited valuable property in his native village, consisting of a mill, several fine vineyards, and a handsome patrimony besides.

His parents were pious people, as appears from the fact that they brought him up in the Calvinistic faith, and that he was early a communicant of the Reformed church. His education too seems to have been carefully directed. And it would appear from his writings and what we know of his power in the use of language that he had received a good, thorough course of training. He is also known to have been a man of studious habits all his life. His literary work reveals a power of grasp and shows a mental poise that indicates a well-balanced and symmetrical nature.

As a young man he was deeply moved by the religious unrest of his time. He studied the Bible carefully in the light of the various religious creeds that clamored for his allegiance. His reverential study of God's Word led him to see the situation as it was, and made it impossible for him to harmonize the religious practices of his day with the divine teaching. Consequently he came to be without a church home. For

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

some time he was merely a Separatist. During this time he affiliated with the Pietists.

But this did not satisfy the longings of his soul. He felt that the teachings of the New Testament could not be fully lived out in this state. His understanding of the Scriptures demanded an organization in which he could practice the rites and ordinances of God's Word. As there was no organization in which they were practiced according to his understanding of them, but one course lay open before him. That was to organize a body whose principles and methods of observing the Christian rites should be in strict accord with apostolic teaching in all respects. How he proceeded to do this we have seen in a former chapter.

During the period of his separation he did considerable evangelistic work. He traveled up and down the Rhine valley, proclaiming the truth of God's Word as he understood it, and exhorted men everywhere to repent. How unsatisfactory his position at this time must have been is seen when we reflect that at the same time he was urging others to forsake their sins and square their lives by the gospel plan, he felt that this could only be done within the pales of God's visible church; yet nowhere did the church practice the ordinances of God's house as years of study and investigation and prayer had revealed them to him. Doubtless this evangelistic experience had much to do with maturing his religious convictions and bringing about the state that made a new organization indispensable.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

At the age of twenty-one he married Anna Margaretha Cling, an estimable young lady of his native village. The marriage was a fortunate one and brought such happiness as those troublous times would allow. She was a faithful companion, encouraging and supporting her husband through the many vicissitudes of his life. She was one of the first eight at Schwarzenau, and followed her husband and this first band of Brethren from one place of refuge to another, until they found a safe asylum in the new world. As the organizer of the Brethren church and as the leader and pastor of this first congregation we admire the courage of Alexander Mack and revere his memory. But how much of the strength and fortitude to carry forward this important work he received from the encouragement of a faithful and loving companion we shall never know.

After the organization of the church in 1708 he gave his entire time and attention to caring for his little flock and to disseminating the doctrines of the New Testament as he understood and practiced them. This cost him his patrimony and handsome estate at Schreisheim. Fines, prosecutions, ransoms from imprisonment soon consumed the valuable mill and fine vineyards. Driven from place to place with his little band, by the stern hand of unrighteous law, although poor in this world's goods, he was yet rich in love to God and in the power of his truth. He sacrificed his worldly possessions willingly, if by so doing he could gain greater riches in Christ.

After many hardships and persecutions he came to

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

America in 1729 and settled at Germantown. He was accompanied by his wife and three sons and the entire congregation which he had shepherded so faithfully since its organization, twenty-one years before. His two little girls had been released from this world of care by the loving Father some years before.

In the peaceable land of Penn he found at last what he had been seeking for so many years in Germany in vain—a quiet retreat from persecution where he could worship God according to the dictates of his conscience unhindered and unmolested. His arrival in Pennsylvania caused great rejoicing among the Brethren there. His presence infused new life into them, and the work of the church was wonderfully revived.

He at once assumed the oversight of the church and devoted his energies to establishing the doctrine he loved in its new environment. In this he was ably seconded by Eld. Peter Becker. From this time on the work of the church was aggressively carried forward and in a short time various congregations were established in the surrounding counties. He remained in charge of the Germantown congregation until his death in 1735.

Under his direction the church flourished. His untiring efforts had resulted in building up a strong membership and organizing them into a working body. His wise counsel had guided the infant church through the critical years of its existence, and it may be said that at his death he left it thoroughly established in the new world.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Elder Mack was a man of pleasing personality. He was possessed of a noble, manly bearing, the reflex of a pure life and high ideals. A quiet, sympathetic disposition made him easy of approach and enabled the least member in his congregation to feel easy in his presence. He ruled by love, never by fear.

His intellectual powers were strong and active. He was a close and accurate thinker. His opinions were formed after a careful examination of all the evidence, and when once formed, were not lightly changed.

He was thoroughly versed in the Bible. Of him it might be said as of the poet Milton, that he practically knew the Bible by heart. Not that he, like Milton, had committed it to memory, but that he had mastered its contents and knew its teachings even to minute details.

He was also well read in historical subjects, especially church history. In his earnest desire to know the practices of the early church he made a careful study of her institutions and usages. By comparing these with the teachings of the apostles, he found that the New Testament teachings were corroborated by the practices of the early church, and felt doubly sure of the correctness of his views.

Eld. James Quinter summarizes his character as follows:<sup>1</sup> "His Christian character seems to have been that of a primitive follower of Christ. Humility, zeal, self-denial and charity were conspicuous among

---

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of Alexander Mack.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

the graces that adorned his character. The high estimation in which he was held by his brethren is seen in the circumstance that he was chosen by them to be their minister. He was the first minister in the little Christian community organized at Schwarzenau in 1708, and labored zealously and successfully to enlarge the borders of their Zion. Of his private character as a Christian father, we may infer favorably from the circumstance that all his sons became pious, and were united to the church before they had completed their seventeenth year. And, what seems somewhat remarkable, they all made a public confession of religion in the seventeenth year of their age."

Alexander Mack is the author of two printed works, *Rites and Ordinances of the House of God*, and *Ground-Searching Questions*. Both appeared at Schwarzenau in 1713, and were probably written the same year.

The former is a concise statement of the principles of the Dunker faith. It was prepared to define the position of the church at a time when distinctions were not sharply drawn, or were obscured by the haze of mysticism that enveloped everything.

The discussion is carried on by means of a dialogue between a father and son. The son constantly directs the conversation to those subjects and conditions with which the infant church had to contend, and the father explains them at considerable length and with great clearness. In the adoption of this

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

method and also in the management of the dialogue Mack shows decided skill.

His treatment of the various topics is terse and to the point. There is no needless discussion of irrelevancies. The author is perfectly at ease with any phase of the discussion that comes up and shows that he has carefully thought through the whole subject before. A Scriptural quotation that may be needed for proof or illustration is always at hand; likewise the facts of history, when occasion requires them, can be marshaled with telling effect.

Some of the subjects discussed are Water Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Excommunication, Love, Faith, Matrimony, Taking Oaths, Outward Worship, The Excuse of Unbelievers, Adultery, Everlasting Torment, The Reward of Believers, Paternal Advice. To make clear the position of the church on these and other subjects was the purpose of the book.

A selection from the book itself will serve to give a better idea of the work than any description of it.<sup>1</sup>

### *Of Faith.*

*Son.*—But I have heard it asserted that all sects appeal to Scripture, and hence one could not maintain his faith by Scripture.

*Father.*—Whosoever says this, that because all sects appeal to Scripture, therefore a true believer must not do the same, such must necessarily be a miserably ignorant person; for it is to a believer a strong support of faith to know that all sects acknowledge the Holy Scripture as divine, and appeal to it,

---

<sup>1</sup> From the English edition of 1888.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

though they do not believe in it (scripturally); for there is a great difference between appealing to the Scriptures and believing on them. This we can perceive by the words of the Lord Jesus when he said to the Jews, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." John 5: 46. The Jews, it is true, all appealed to Moses, but in his writings they did not believe.

Thus all sects appeal not only to Scripture, but to Jesus himself; but as they believe in Jesus, so they believe in the Scripture. Can a true believer, then, be so stupid or blind as to think or say, "Because all sects appeal to a crucified Savior, therefore I may not appeal to him"? That would please the devil very much.

But, no! true believers have learned of their Lord and Master more and better wisdom; for when the devil in his temptation of the Lord Jesus appealed to the Scriptures, Jesus answered in faith, and appealed thereunto. Matt. 4: 6, 7. For though the devil and all false spirits appeal to the Scripture, still they believe it not. Thou wilt discover that these very men, who want to mislead a believer by saying that all sects appeal to the Scripture, yet will always appeal to that authority themselves.

Hence the believing children of God look only to their heavenly Father, and believe and follow him in his revealed Word, because they are assured in believing that God and his express Word are altogether one, otherwise a believer would have to omit much if he would not do in faith what the wicked and infidels do in their unbelief.

He would not be allowed to pray, to sing, to labor, eat and sleep, and the like, because to the wicked it is all sin and abomination before God. But unto believers, and those that are pure, all things are pure, while unto unbelievers nothing is pure. Titus 1: 15. Therefore learn well to distinguish in all things according to the

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Scripture, that thou mayest not get into confusion, as it is the case, alas! with many souls at this time, who are greatly confused when they see the ungodly wicked performing acts of worship, such as praying, singing, holding meetings, baptizing, going to sacrament, and the like.

Then unenlightened reason may think, "If the wicked do this, then it is of no account, and I will omit it altogether," and thus such people are confounded so much that at last they know no more what to think or believe. Thus they will be led to make or invent a way which the Scripture did not teach, and to imagine when on this way that they have risen higher than the apostles, and hence receive no counsel any more from the apostolic writings. Already have I known and heard in my time of many such persons, but have also noticed that the end of their way has produced a deep ruin; for soon, very soon, they fell so low that at last they believed nothing at all, but fell back to the world and to the broad road. May God, in mercy, preserve all simple believers in Christ, that they may not desire to mount so high, but to descend to those of low estate and humble mind! Rom. 12: 16.

And Paul says to his son Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3: 15-17.

*Son.*—Can or may we believe in all things the testimony of the Holy Scripture, and is a believer bound to believe and obey that Scripture, or does the spirit of God lead him other ways sometimes, of which the external letter of the Scripture knows nothing?

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Father.*—It is not necessary to tell a believer that he shall and must believe and obey the Scriptures; for no man can be a believer without the Holy Ghost, who is to bring forth faith. Now the Scripture is only an external testimony of those things which have been taught and commanded by the Holy Ghost in former times, and by whom also were pronounced the promises and threatenings. If therefore a person, being truly sorry and repentant of his sins, through grace obtains the Holy Spirit from God, the Father of all spirits, it is the same spirit of faith that worked many hundred years ago in Peter, Paul and John. And though the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles in a greater measure, for the spread of the Gospel, yet he is the same Holy Spirit in all believers. Now, whatsoever Paul, Peter and John have written, ordained and commanded, all believers were then agreed to, as far as they were sound in the faith.

Now, since there is but one God and but one Spirit, this same one Holy Spirit can will nothing else but what his will was many hundred years ago, namely, our sanctification. And, again, what the Holy Spirit has ordained for believers to observe, that is externally written and recorded, and with this agree all believers, because the Holy Spirit teaches us inwardly just the same as the Scripture teaches outwardly.

But whenever men come upon the Scriptures with their own wisdom and carnal minds, they have not within themselves the spirit of faith; hence they cannot believe the external testimony of the Scriptures, nor exercise the obedience of faith. And, indeed, it is not written for them; the commandments contained therein do not concern them. Even as if a king gave his subjects written laws, with great promises to those who should obey them and also great threats against those who should not observe them. Now there might other men, who are not that king's subjects, read those

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

laws and talk about them a great deal; but since they are not, nor wish to become, subjects, they do not regard his threats or believe his promises or bow themselves under his laws, statutes and commandments.

Just so it is with the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. Whosoever reads it may see what Jesus, the King of kings, has promised to all men who truly repent, believe in him, and are willing to follow him obediently in all his commandments. They can likewise see and read in Holy Writ what the Lord Jesus has threatened to all impenitent sinners, who will not repent and who will not believe his Gospel, nor are they willing that Jesus with his commandments, which he has left to us in writing, through his Spirit, should reign over them.

A man may read, indeed, outwardly the Scriptures; he may talk and write about them, but if he has not the spirit of faith in him he will concern himself but little about their commandments, nor be terrified by the threats contained therein. The reason is plain—his inward ears are not yet opened.

Therefore the Lord Jesus said unto the people who heard him preach: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 11: 15; 13: 43. And in the Revelation of St. John the Spirit of God calleth upon all and each of the seven churches: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches," etc. Rev. 2: 7.

Thus, when a person reads externally the Holy Scripture, and is a believer, whose inward ears are opened, he hears what the Lord Jesus enjoins in his doctrine; he hears what the apostles require in their writings, and by this inward hearing he is urged on to observe a true obedience also outwardly; he reads externally the Scripture in faith, and hears the internal word of life, which gives him power and strength to follow Jesus. But where faith is wanting, a man may

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

indeed outwardly hear and read, and say, "It is a dead letter which I cannot obey, because I am not internally convinced of what is outwardly written." But he knows not that he is wanting in faith and the true love of God. John 14: 15.

### *Of the External and Internal Word.*

*Son.*—But I have been told by many that Christians stood in the New Covenant, and had the Law of God written in their hearts, and consequently it was not necessary for them to obey and follow the external Scripture.

*Father.*—I am glad that thou hast started this question. Now attend well to the pure mind of God, and thou wilt easily see that such sayings contain some truth, which, however, is very much mixed with lies; for when the Lord God formerly manifested to his people his Law by Moses, he wrote it upon two tables of stone and gave them to Moses, who was to put them in the Ark of the Covenant. Deut. 10: 1, 5; Heb. 9: 4. They were to make a copy of the laws and place them upon the posts of their houses. Deut. 6: 6, 9. It is said "that the words of the commandments should be in their hearts; of which they should talk to their children, bind them for a sign upon their hands, and write them upon the posts of their houses and gates."

That external copy now was to be nothing else, much less anything to the contrary, but a faithful transcript of that which God himself had written on the tables of stone, and which were laid up in the Holy of Holies, hidden within the Ark of the Covenant, so that the external and internal laws were of the same import. Now, what the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies, in which the tables of the Law were kept, that is now in the New Covenant, every believer's heart, in which also most surely will be found the tables of the Law of God, with the law

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

written on their hearts, not by the hand of man, but by the Holy Ghost.

And this law, which is internally written by the Spirit of God, is altogether one and the same with that externally written in the New Testament, which has proceeded entirely from the internal, and is an express image of that internal living word of God. But where a person proudly says that the law of God is in his heart, while he still opposes the commandments, statutes and laws which the Son of God and his apostles have instituted, and whereof the Scriptures externally testify, then we may safely believe that such a person is yet carnal, and that the law, which he says is in his heart, has been written there by the spirit of error and falsehood.

Again, herein is a clear token of the Law of God and of the law of the deceiving spirit. For all in whose hearts the Law of God is written are united in the one faith, in the one baptism and in the one Spirit, according to Jesus Christ; for it is the perfect will of the true Law-giver that his own should all be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. John 17: 21. But the law, which the spirit of error, by his false gospel, writes in the hearts, is of such a kind that it is, in the first place, quite uncertain concerning divine testimonies. Psa. 5: 10. In the second place, it separates men from the commandments and ordinances of God, and divides them into a multitude of different confessions and opinions.

I have observed this in many who said they were a free people; they needed not subject themselves to the Scripture of the New Testament in the letter; for the Law of God was written in their hearts. But likewise have I seen and known that not two of them were agreed concerning the beginning of a Christian life, or the principles of the doctrine of Christ according to Scripture, but that as many as were the men

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

that had such a haughty disposition, so many were the laws which they had; and I was often led to think what a curious spirit that must be who would write such different laws into the hearts of men.

Of this the Lord God complained already through the prophet Jeremiah, that the people of Israel were led astray by false prophets, forsook the only Law of God and the only altar of the Lord, and in their false liberty made for themselves other gods and altars, according to their own notions. Jer. 11: 13. The same is the case with people in our times, who boast of great liberty without obeying the divine counsel and commandments according to Holy Scripture. Truly it may be said, "As many men, as many spirits, and as many laws."

But however great the spiritual pretensions are, it still continues to be Babylon, confusion and discord. Yet such builders will not desist from their intentions, though they see themselves that the Lord has confused their language. Yea, they see how so many learned and wise people have built in this manner, contrary to the order of the Lord Jesus and have been brought to shame and have become fools; still new builders begin again and again to prosecute this building of confusion. Things become more and more confused and abominable, and if they shall not soon cease, there will be at last "men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." 2 Tim. 3: 8, 9.

Now here you may see and know of the true and false law, how both may be written into the hearts of men. The false law will be written by the spirit of error into the hearts of the unbelieving; the true law of life is written by the holy spirit of truth into the children of the New Covenant, in the true believers, and is altogether one and consistent with what Christ

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

externally commanded, and with what the apostles have written.

Mack's other work is *Ground-Searching Questions, Proposed by Eberhard Ludwig Gruber to the New Baptists of Witgenstein, to be answered each separately: Also a brief and plain Reply to the same, formerly given out in manuscript by a member of the church in Witgenstein.*

This consists of thirty-nine queries propounded by Gruber and sent to the church for answer. The questions seem to have been prepared with care and were submitted in a kindly spirit, as is shown by the following request:

“Beloved in God, Friends and Fellow-pilgrims:

“There are many who have hitherto desired to have a more direct account and report of your new baptism and church, since that which has been said, or even written here and there on the subject, has left them still in much uncertainty. In order now to obtain your opinion more fully and authentically, and to be relieved from all further doubt on this subject, we have come to the conclusion to propound to you the present frank and simply-stated questions, upon which we expect your plain and candid answers as early as possible.”

To this request Mack replied as follows:

“Dear Friends: Since you ask in love our opinion, and since also the Apostle Peter teaches believers, 1 Peter 3: 15, to ‘be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

in you,' we would not avoid giving you in love and candor, and with assurance of faith according to our simplicity, very brief answers to these proposed questions, and to leave them to your examination before God."

In this work, as in the *Plain View*, the author treats his topics in a very brief and condensed manner. The answers are sufficiently full and comprehensive, however, and are always clear. The style is direct and simple and almost severely terse.

In reply to the query, whether an all-wise God did not permit the ceremony of baptism to be put entirely away, so that in its place a new dispensation of the Spirit might be established for his people, in accordance with all the prophetic promises,<sup>1</sup> Mack answered in the following words:

"We are of the opinion and believe as the apostle says, Heb. 7:12, 'The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' As long as the Levitical priesthood was standing, so long no one was permitted to abolish the Law of circumcision without incurring severe punishment, and the displeasure of God. But when Christ was come, he, as the eternal High-Priest and Son of God, introduced a law of life, and the first, because of its weakness and inability to produce perfection, was abolished. Christ having obtained eternal redemption for us, revealed the way to the Holy of Holies, gave none but laws of life, and established his will or testament by his blood, so that we believe and confess,

---

<sup>1</sup> Query 6.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

should an angel from heaven come, and intend to reveal another or better gospel, that even such an angel must be accursed, according to the testimony of Paul, Gal. 1:8. Hence we believe that the doctrine of Jesus, the Crucified, is to be observed, until he himself shall come again, in flaming fire, and take vengeance on them that have not been obedient to his Gospel, in accordance with the testimony of Paul, 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. Therefore the doctrine of Jesus is justly to be observed by the believers in our days, but to the unbelievers nothing seems to be commanded."

It will be observed that this query savors of the very essence of mysticism or pietism.

The belief that Christianity could consist entirely of the spirit, without reference to external forms and ceremonies, was very common and was held by a great many persons in Mack's day. It is a deceptive doctrine and one of the most popular errors that the early church had to contend with.

Mack states the position of the church on the question, which is of course also his own view, in no uncertain language. The fact that he thus early and clearly defined the position of the church on this point may have had much to do with the fidelity and consistency with which the church has always clung to the literal form of observing all the external ordinances.

It may not be amiss in our day to have our attention called anew to this same deception. There is an easy way of disposing of the positive commands of Christ by placing them in the realm of allegory and ex-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

plaining them simply as types and illustrations. How prevalent the habit of doing this is, most of us know. And what the Christian church has lost by letting go of the plain, simple commands of Christ and substituting some "easier way" no one can estimate.

On this point, however, the Brethren church stands just where it did in 1708. We still hold, and we believe that experience as well as history proves it, that the fullest Christian character can be attained only by literal obedience to God's Word. The spiritual blessing that comes from obedience is a rich reward for following the Master literally in all things.

Mack's answer to Gruber's 22nd query raised a storm of protest. The query was, "Whether the external ban (excommunication) is an essential part of the constitution of the church of Christ, since he himself did not enforce and exercise it even upon the very wicked Judas."

Here is the answer.

"The ban is an essential and necessary thing in the church of Christ, as long as it is at war in this wicked world with wolves and evil spirits. No church of Christ could exist without it. The devil with his leaven of wickedness would soon destroy all that is good. True believers, while they were steadfast in the faith, never could refuse the salutary restraints appointed in the Gospel. They have always viewed them as divine means of grace, appointed by the great love and provident care of God, and used them as a strong tower and wall round about the church of the Lord.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

"With respect to Judas, we say that Christ has executed the ban sufficiently upon him, giving him over to Satan, for he hanged himself. But that he was not excommunicated before he committed the outward act, is not against excommunication, but rather in its favor. This was the mind of God at all times, as we perceive in Adam, who may have had some intercourse with the tempter previously (to his fall), but he was not driven out of Paradise until he had actually eaten of the forbidden fruit. So Judas may have entertained traitorous thoughts long before he carried them out; but the long-suffering of Jesus had borne with him, and patiently tried to bring him to repentance, until the evil obtained the supremacy and became manifest in the deed; then he was sufficiently excommunicated by Christ, and we think the ban was fully executed upon him."

From these citations it will be observed that Alexander Mack was not wanting in directness and simplicity of speech. His terseness, almost laconic brevity, attests the practical nature of the man. His work is not remarkable for its literary merit, but it is not for this that it was produced. Mack can scarcely be called a fluent writer, and it is probable that he was not a great orator. He has a mastery over language that enables him to use it with telling effect, but he wields it as an artisan rather than as an artist. Nevertheless, his two little books are priceless gems. Every member of the church ought to read them carefully. Through them the unique position of the

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Dunker church among the various denominations was first published to the world.

### *Christopher Sower, Sr.*

We have already called attention to the leading facts in the life of this great man. Born in central Germany in the latter years of the seventeenth century, he early felt the influence of that mighty wave of religious sentiment that was sweeping over the country. At Schwarzenau, at Berleberg, at Creyfelt and at other places he came in contact with the Dunkers and other dissenting bodies, among whom he formed many friendships that lasted through life.

Of his ancestors nothing is known. They were doubtless of that sturdy middle class that forms the substantial basis of every nation. This is consistent with Kapp's statement that Sower "learned the manufacture of spectacles in his native city." In early life he learned at least one other trade, that of tailoring. It was upon this that he depended for support when he first came to America.

His boyhood home surrounded him with good influences. If "the child is father of the man," he was early instructed in the principles of right and taught to respect God's Word—probably at a pious mother's knee.

His education was by no means neglected. But where he studied or to what extent we know nothing. It is natural to think of him as attending the schools of his native town, and taking rank with the best

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

scholars. At all events he acquired a real thirst for knowledge, which made him a student all his days.

At the age of thirty-one he came to America, a married man, with wife, and child three years old. The little family settled in Germantown. This was in 1724. A year and a half later found them in Lancaster county, in possession of a farm on Mill Creek. Here they came in contact with Beissel and the Sabbatarians, and Sower's life was saddened by the defection of his wife who, under the influence of their mystical teaching, left her husband and child to lead a life of seclusion. Years later she returned to her home and was fully reconciled to her husband and assumed her position in the home as wife and mother.

Saddened by the action of his wife, Sower returned to Germantown in 1731. Here he placed his son, now a boy of ten years, in school, and he himself plied several of those trades for which he was later celebrated. He was in turn optician, clockmaker, apothecary, skilled mechanic—or rather, it may be, several or all of these at the same time.

In 1738 he began the printing business and henceforth to the end of his life, twenty years later, he was a leading figure in the public life of Pennsylvania. The enterprise he established was an honor, not only to himself, but to the land of his adoption and the church of his choice. For high principle, undaunted perseverance and disinterested service, the record of these twenty years is almost without a parallel in the public life of our country.

In some respects the first Christopher Sower is the

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

most striking figure in the early history of the Brethren church. It was he who had the courage to undertake the seemingly impossible, and yet by indomitable energy and pluck carry it to a successful issue. He it was who made a church literature possible within the first half century of the church's history. To the establishment of his printing-press, and to his encouragement and fostering care of the literary resources of the church we owe, in large measure, the first period of our literary history.

The educational influence he exerted upon his generation was very marked. His newspaper, almanac, and other publications became real dispensers of intelligence to the German population of the New World. As we have seen, his influence among them was very great. Hence the interest he took in instructing them and directing their attention to the things pertaining to their highest good, was met by a hearty response in action and appreciation on their part.

By creating the German newspaper he called into existence an instrument that he wielded with remarkable power and success for twenty years. Not only was this a disseminator of knowledge and culture, but it had the effect of cultivating a taste for reading on the part of the masses, and bringing about a condition in which the cultivation of literature as such, became, to some extent, possible.

To his newspaper and almanac he gave some of the best efforts of his life. No task was small to him. As collector of news for his paper, he was guided by a

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

conscientious consideration of what was best for his readers. He strove to make his almanac a store of useful information and wise counsel. Journalism, in his view, carried with it weighty responsibilities. Power to direct public opinion was a power not to be carelessly used or abused, but to be exercised as a trust, involving high moral obligations.

The constant practice of writing incident to his printing business, and especially in connection with his periodicals, developed for Sower an easy and graceful style. He wrote without apparent effort, and seemingly from an abundant store of information. His natural resources were great, and his constant intercourse with cultured men, as well as his study of the important questions of the day, kept his store well replenished.

He wrote or spoke on most of the public issues of the day, and generally with telling effect. He wielded the editorial pen with positive power, and many a public evil or private vice was checked by his timely correction and its advocates put to confusion by the stinging blows of his well-directed criticism.

In 1739 Sower printed the *Weyrauchs-Hügel*, as we have seen. In the course of the work a difference arose between the publisher and Conrad Beissel, the leader of the Brotherhood, in regard to some of the hymns. The difference led to a protracted correspondence which was carried on with vigor and point on both sides. After the matter had been adjusted, although a complete reconciliation was not effected until several years later, Sower published *Ein*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*abgenöthiger Bericht: oder zum öfftern begehrte Antwort denen darnach fragenden dargelegt; In sich haltende: zwey Briefe und deren Ursach.* (An elicited statement, or an oft-desired answer given to those making inquiry; containing two Letters and the Causes that produced them.)

Following is one of the two letters translated by Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker of Philadelphia, who owns the only copy of this rare work now known to exist. This excellent translation was printed some years ago in the Pennsylvania Magazine, vol. 12, but it is not generally accessible to readers. It is through the kind permission of Judge Pennypacker that it is here reproduced. Its rarity, together with the excellence of the translation, and the interesting circumstance that gave rise to the letter, all conspire to give it a unique and commanding interest.

### *Christopher Sower to Conrad Beissel.*

I have until within the last few days been in hopes that that work which I did, and caused to be done, upon the hymn-book would redound to the honor of God, to whom I am under the greatest obligations for all that he has done for me and all creatures, and will still do through time and eternity, and I remain bound to him even though I shall see no good day more. It is his way that when we dismiss all which is not from him he fills us with that which more concerns him. The result is that we love all that is from him, and have a hatred and horror of all that does not please him. In the beginning much remains concealed, while we are in the shoes of children as the saying is, which in years of youth and manhood become as clear

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

as day. I have therefore with patience overlooked some hymns, which I had rather sacrificed to Vulcan by throwing them into the fire. I thought something might be given to the first alphabet scholars as it were according to their ability and which they could grasp and that it would not be wise to break down the first rounds of the ladder. I have willingly let go what the amateur poet through vanity and sentiment has brought together, especially since Brother Peter Miller said to me: "The worst soldiers are always put in the front rank." Taking this view of it I had nothing more to say. Afterwards so much of wood, straw, stubble and trash came that it went pretty hard with me. It was very deeply impressed upon me that each work should be a birth to appear in eternity, not in the lightness of the mercurial pictures drawn by men, but to stand in the clean way. However I remained in hope that something better would come in the future. A still greater mercy befell me, to wit: In the beginning of the 16th Rubric or division there was placed a silly hymn which, on first reading through it, I considered to be among the stupid amateur poetry and I wished that something better could be put in its place. In the 29th verse it runs:

*"Der doch träget deine Last  
Und dabei hat wenig Rast."*

There I stopped and read the remainder over again, but while I was attending to some other business, it was printed. I was not at ease about it. I regarded it as among those great errors of which today the world is full and wished that it might still remain among those rejected. I thought if it should come, either here or in Germany or anywhere else, before the eyes of an enlightened spirit who has found and delights in God and his Savior as the true rest, he might be deceived by such miserable stuff after such

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

a magnificently brilliant title-page and I should be ashamed because of my negligence. I might perhaps be able to find excuses that would answer before men, but in my breast would burn a fire that would be quenched by no excuses. I thereupon asked Brother Samuel whether he did not think a great mistake had there occurred in writing, since unskillful poets are often compelled for the sake of their rhyme to use words which destroy the sense. He said to me, "No, I shall let it stand just as it is." I consented to do it then because it suddenly occurred to me, that in the pine forests the industrious ant gathers together straw, wood, earth, shells, and resin, from the pines which they carry underneath into the hill and that this is called "*Weihrauch*." This pacified me to some extent because it accorded with the title. Still I could not reconcile the word "*Zionitisch*" with it, because upon Mount Zion no such collection can be found as I have described. There God is praised in silence. There are there only two hymns. The one is the song of Moses running, briefly, like this, "Lord, thou and no other hast delivered us from all of our enemies and dost protect us and lead us through outer danger." Exodus, 15th. There is no quarreling more, no time, no change of day and night. It therefore occurred to me that you must have a wonderful idea of Zion since you could fix its nature but know nothing of and have not experienced real and actual death. The second song is short. It is the song of the Lamb which is strangled. It runs thus: "All is fulfilled. There is nothing more to do. Now praise we our God in silence."

But you said in the meeting when I was there that every verse was suitable for Mount Zion. That is easily said if a man has a well smoothed tongue. You will find out otherwise however. Meanwhile I regretted my lost time over the books and that my hope

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

which had something honorable for its object should have so entirely failed. I spoke with Brother Samuel<sup>1</sup> once more about it in what way it was to be understood. He answered me that I should not blame them for being Catholic, which I from my heart wished to be true since in the Community of Christ there are no others. For instance we believe in the mediation of holy ones and truly of those who are afterward in life. This caused me no scruple because it is my daily exercise notwithstanding I am still not holy. What then will the holy do? But when he asked me whether I believed only in the one Christ I would have been shocked into a cold fever if true quiet had not prevented. I then read the whole hymn over again once more and saw the man who was intended and it gave great sorrow. But I remembered how far the human race depart from God and that man is inclined to idolatry and easily moved to make images and to honor himself while the tendency to depart from the true way (found only in the ground of the spirit and in the abandonment of all creature things) is born in him. He is therefore easily led to act with sects, parties, and like divisions, and one believes and receives from another that which is pleasant without real experience of what will be the outcome. It may be therefore that it ought not to be taken amiss in the writer of the hymn, since as the eyes are so do they see. Still I have no real peace about this affair. I determined then to write to you and ask you whether you had not seen or read this piece or had not considered what a dreadful production it is; to say that without serious difficulty it can still be taken out and in its place something to the honor of God, or for the good of weak souls, can be put in where the two pages are cut out which I will do at my own expense; and to ask you whether on the other hand it was done

---

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Eckerling.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

according to your wish and inclination. If so, I would remind you that the good Moses could not go into Canaan because he honored not the Lord when he said "must we fetch you water?" See what an afflicted burden-bearer and once true knight Moses was and where is such a Moses? Herod may well have made such an unusually good address to the people that it caused them to say, "That is the voice of God and not of man." The angel struck not the unwitting people because they were inclined to idolatry but him who accepted the Godly honor. Already you suffer yourself to be called "Father."<sup>1</sup> Oh, would there were a single one who comprehended Christ and respected and carried out the commands of him who absolutely forbid that you let any one call you master and should call any man "Father" upon this earth! The misery is already great enough, as you yourself said to me significantly. You are the greatest God in the community. When you sat still everything fell back. You had once for some time given up the meeting<sup>2</sup> and everything fell away. Your dearest brethren hastened to the world. Even Brother N.<sup>3</sup> had made a wagon in which to ride to the city. There were other instances which you told me. And did you not the other day in the meeting significantly and at great length speak of this idolatry and how they went whoring after you as is indeed the case. And now will they with full throats call and sing:

*"Sehet, sehet, sehet an!  
Sehet, sehet an denmann!  
Der von Gott erhöet ist  
Der ist unser Herr und Christ."*

---

<sup>1</sup> Beissel's cloister name was Father Friedsam.

<sup>2</sup> In February, 1732, but was later prevailed upon to return and take charge again.

<sup>3</sup> Supposed to be Jacob Gass.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

If Brother Samuel had not said to me concerning it that the hymn had a double meaning and one might take it as he chose, I should have considered the last as referring to Christ and looked upon the "God without rest" as a compulsion of the verse. Are there not already molten calves enough? Is not the door of Babel great enough that they should build another little door through which they call loudly, "See here is Christ" in order to entice souls to themselves? Do not misunderstand me. I value highly the favor of returning to you. But I fear God will play his own part in it and leave the beautiful vessel empty lest otherwise upright souls might suffer an injury which certainly would cause no single child of God pleasure. Much more were it to be wished from the innermost heart that all the might of the stars were entirely lost and that Christ were indeed the ruler in you and the whole community. This would give me great joy to look upon through my whole life long. There is nothing more to say except that, with the permission of Brother Michael, I should like, if I might, to take out this one hymn and put another in its place because it concerns the honor of God. It is easy to see that I have no earthly concern in it and that the influence of no man's interest has anything to do with it. There are still as many as a hundred hymns with which you can feed the senses that they die not. I am sure that a thousand pounds would not persuade me to print such a one, for the reason that it leads the easy way to idolatry. If it were my paper it would have been already burned. But my suggestion was met by the brethren only with scornful and mocking words, and at last they said, "Now we will pack up the paper." I thought "they still have better right to it than the Hussars." With such disposition of the matter for my own part I can be at peace. God will

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

find a way to protect his honor. As to the rest, I love thee still.

*Christoph Saur.*

About the middle of the 18th century some politicians of Pennsylvania became alarmed, or professed to become alarmed, at the rapid increase of the German population of the province. They seemed to fear that the Germans would eventually become the dominating power in the government and would arrogate the reins of authority to themselves. They were accused of a want of loyalty, and slanderous reports charged them with being on the point of forming an alliance with the Indians.

Under the shelter of such rumors an effort was made to bring about legislative enactment that should curtail the free suffrage of the Germans. Sower called attention several times in his different publications to the "wire-pulling" tactics that were being employed towards the Germans, and warned the latter to be on their guard. He at the same time showed how untrue the circulated reports had been, and called attention to the quiet and peaceable disposition of the Germans as a people.

This did not, however, stop the machinations of his political adversaries, and in 1755 Sower wrote and published a little tract entitled: *Eine zu dieser Zeit höchst nöthige Warnung und Erinnerung an die freye Ein-wohner der Provinz Pensylvanien von Einem, dem die Wohlfahrt des Landes angelegen und darauf bedacht ist.* (A Warning and Remonstrance of the greatest Necessity at this Time to the free Inhabitants

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

of the Province of Pennsylvania by one to whom the Welfare of this Country is important and therefore considered.)

Friends, Brethren and Fellow Countrymen:<sup>1</sup>

I have long been a sad and anxious observer of the public undertakings here in the land, and have noticed with astonishment the constant accumulation of autocratic power and the open assaults that have been made against our well-established rights. I have also noted the audacity and shamelessness with which the sons or minions of this disgusting superiority have made their slavish doctrine known to the world. . . .

It is indeed a very important matter that we know our enemies rightly and are able to tell who are such. They are readily recognized by their practices, by their theories and their association together. If you know a party of people, who surpass all others in the art of lying, you may undoubtedly place them in the ranks of these our enemies. For if they invent a falsehood in the morning and bravely defend it during the day, in the afternoon they will repeat it as truth, and will finally come to believe it themselves as a precious truth and will swear by it. Certainly very little account is to be taken of what they say or what they do, what they sanction or what they repeat, since one has as much truth in it as the other. There is no lie ever so impudent and foolish, or story ever so ridiculous, but these people, for the sake of their own temporary exaltation, will quickly publish it among their hangers-on, with the greatest assurance that it is true. In short, they have lost all credit, confidence and reputation among the fair-minded element of the country people.

---

<sup>1</sup> From a copy in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Their theories are so fantastic and absurd in a free government, that to speak briefly they are simply disgusting. The fine things in their books are scattered hither and thither until their resources in disseminating them are exhausted. For this reason, I thought it necessary to collect these and set them before your eyes, so that the impartial people will not need to trust simply to my word, but that they may read and understand it for themselves, and that the lovers of freedom and universal power may be able to decide whether these people can in any wise be regarded as friends and protectors of the country and of the principles of right; also whether they do not make themselves liars when they apply to themselves such excellent titles as Keeper, Guardian, Protector of our freedom, because they manifestly show that they are traitors to this country, who desire to overthrow and pervert the honored rights and principles of this province. Shameless enough are they to apply abusive nicknames frequently to those who seek to support freedom and the advantages of the country, and desire nothing else than the true welfare and happiness of this province.

First, we see this from their letters which they have written to England under the title, State Letters, or Brief Compend of the Condition of the Province of Pennsylvania, which contains one of their leading doctrines. There they wrote, "The newly-acquired lands thrive best under a government that is administered as the people generally would like to have it." Therefore, the mass of the people should first be given this desirable freedom, and no burdens should be laid upon them, so that they will become industrious and will settle in such lands. "But as soon as the country people become rich, and fairly get to becoming wealthy," and have reached the proper goal for the public welfare, "Then it should be considered how

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

a restraint can be put upon them to hold them back, and to take enough from them that their power may not become too great." In other words, this is to say that it was right and just that the Crown and our first Proprietor promised freedom and privileges to the first settlers in this province, and gave it to them in writing, in their separate characters, in order to induce our ancestors to exchange the blessings of their fatherland for the misery and terror of a far distant wilderness. And if they have also paid dearly for this their liberty, as an inheritance for themselves and their posterity, and these their descendants have also acquired something for themselves and have now become numerous, it is therefore now high time that we take away their freedom again, which they have paid for so dearly, in a manner which is called "Checks to the Power of the People." That is, we must put a restraint upon the people and take away from the power which they have. By this means the subject will be made disloyal, so that they will disregard their allegiance which they have sworn to the king, and their promises will not be regarded hereafter because those are not kept that had been promised to them.

Secondly, the patrons of our liberty, as they call themselves, have another crafty design, namely, that the Germans shall hereafter no longer have the liberty to vote in the elections for the Assembly, (who, however, according to their own statement, make up half the population of the country) until they have acquired sufficient understanding of our condition; that is, until they learn to become so pliant that they allow themselves to be directed, bent and led, just as their leaders desire; until they think like they think, and do as they are haughtily commanded to do, no matter about their welfare or their desires, or how important their possessions may be, or however securely their loyal purpose and allegiance may be bound to the true

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

interests of the country. In this way half of the inhabitants will be forced to bind themselves together by laws against their government and against the basis and quality of the kind of freedom that is dispensed by this English arrangement, but it will be against their desire that they have to take any part in this, either willingly or unwillingly. These guardians of our liberty say, "It is absurd and inconceivable to observe that a horde of ignorant, proud, headstrong, boorish German peasants should have the right and permission to cast their votes at an election for assemblymen," as it is stated in their writings called State Letters, page 40.

Thirdly, they have this design, that they will do away with the laudable custom which has existed up to this time, namely, that one can and is permitted to cast his folded ballot for assemblymen, sheriff, coroner and assessor, which right is one of the most excellent and essential marks of freedom. Instead of this a poor honest man is now to be required to cast his vote (if he has one) publicly and orally, which is against his mind and conscience, because he knows that it is contrary to the best interests of the country. By their self-will they have assumed the power to rule the elections, and to punish and oppress those who attempt to vote in the election contrary to their arbitrary arrangements.

Fourthly, they propose that the sheriff and the coroner, upon the faithful discharge of whose offices very much depends, shall no longer be elected by the people of the country, unless they themselves have nominated them. By this means a partisan or packed jury can always be brought together, from such as depend upon them, so that they can always destroy the liberty of their subjects whenever they wish.

Fifthly, they desire to give to the Governor power that he can continue the Assembly as long as it pleases

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

him, and may also dissolve them at pleasure; so that if they do not act according to his will, he can make them sit at the wrong time until they become tired; so that they finally will have to consent to what he wishes, or to what pleases the Proprietor, as may be read in their State Letters on the 71st page.

Sixthly, that your assemblymen shall not have the right to hear the complaints of the people and to relieve their burdens, no matter how terribly and barbarously they may be oppressed. Yes, they are not even to have the power to punish the most insolent encroachment upon their own and the people's rights.

Seventhly, that a general law be passed establishing a militia force, the officers of which the Governor alone shall appoint, which provision they regard as being absolutely necessary. This is not to protect the province against the invasion of a foreign enemy, as becomes clear when we consider the behavior of the regular troops; but it is that your rights and privileges shall be given up and transferred into the hands of your domestic enemies, and you be made subject to the designs of ambitious people, who desire to make a large number of new relations, new hangers-on, and subordinates in the government, who will be entirely subject to their will and influence, as may be read in State Letters, 16th page.

The agents of tyranny have now become too mad and foolish to acknowledge and establish these principles and maxims which they have in view, along with many others which are too disagreeable to relate or to bring forward publicly either in their writings or in their daily discourses. . . .

Liberty, my worthy countrymen, is our natural right. A right which, it is to be hoped, the God of nature and virtue offers you, and will also support you that you may be able to secure and retain it. Your rulers have received power to protect you and

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

not to oppress you. Your government is so arranged, that half of the privilege of making ordinances and laws has fallen to you. And you have by nature and by the fundamental law of proprietorship the entire control of your purses and whatever else you possess. You alone are the great counterpoise and have the power to persuade the other part of the government and to cause that it remain in its proper bounds. If it transcends its proper limits, it is your fault, and you are the ones, who can command your assemblymen (as is your duty and privilege) to bring the agents of oppression to account and punish them. . . .

Finally, whether you be English, German, Dutch or Swedish, whether you be Episcopal, Presbyterian, Quaker or of any other religious denomination, you are by virtue of your living here and by the laws of the land free people and not slaves. You have the right to all the liberty of a person of English birth, and you have your portion in the fundamental laws of the land. You are men, men of intelligence; let me once more exhort you that you will need all of your good understanding to arouse yourselves and maintain your liberty. It all lies with you; you are able to protect yourselves against this present public calamity; you are the source whence the improvement of the present condition is to be hoped for and expected. Furthermore, we dare not expect the maintenance of our rights and liberty from such people, who hold their offices, their reputations, their power, their success and their wealth from those very ones who are making every effort to destroy these rights and liberties. For the people of this stripe would much rather see your liberties fall to the ground and would gladly be the instruments by which your rights are entirely destroyed.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

### *Peter Becker.*

Among the great leaders of the Brethren in Europe and America in the early days of the church no one is more distinctive in some respects than Peter Becker (Baker). He was a singularly sweet-spirited man, and although not specially aggressive as a leader, he was a wise counselor and saw clearly through the fog of mysticism that beclouded the minds of so many men of his generation.

He was a native of Dillsheim, and early came under the influence of the "awakened." Indeed the centres of religious influence seemed to have a charm for him. In 1714 he accepted immersion at the hands of the Brethren and became a member of the Creyfert congregation. He was then twenty-seven years of age. A little later he was elected to the ministry. In this capacity he was associated with Elder John Naas, Elder Christian Libe, Stephen Koch and others.

Of the terrible persecutions waged against the Brethren in these early days I have already written. Upon the sensitive nature of Peter Becker they seemed to fall with unusual force. After some five years of almost untold suffering in mind, body and spirit, he organized a small body of members and sailed for America. This was in 1719. So it was to his leadership that we owe the transplanting of the first colony of Dunkers from Germany to the new world.

It is said that the party consisted of twenty families, and the voyage is said to have been stormy and fraught with hardships, which may well be true. The party landed at Germantown, attracted thither doubt-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

less by former settlers from the Fatherland, and by the mild government of the peace-loving Penn.

By trade Becker was a master weaver. To this trade he applied himself on his arrival to this country. In course of time he acquired a piece of land—twenty-three acres—in Germantown. The cultivation of this and the management of his looms are the secular pursuits to which he gave his attention.

Although he was the organizer and the acknowledged leader of the little company that crossed the ocean with him, it does not appear that he made any effort to organize the members into a congregation until they had been here more than four years. This may seem strange to us. But we can not now lift the veil and see all of the influences that conspired at that time to crush the good man's heart.

There had been bitter experiences in Germany; not only persecutions by the secular and ecclesiastical governments, but also misunderstandings, strifes, excommunications in the little company of Taufers themselves. The hearts of many were saddened and others were deterred from entering the fold. With these sad experiences rankling in their minds the little company found themselves in a new and strange world. They were as a handful of pilgrims among utter strangers.

What could they do in establishing a new system of worship in a new and wild country? Their first care was to provide daily bread for themselves and their families. They were without friends or definite prospects. Moreover, their hearts were crushed.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

But this was not all. Peter Becker was not an ordained elder, and at this time there was no second degree of the ministry. Becker, therefore, had no legal right to organize and conduct church work, except under the direction of a superior officer. This he did not have, as there was at that time no ordained elder in America.

When the organization was at length effected, he became elder by choice of the congregation. If this was an illegal procedure, it at least had the exigencies of the circumstances in justification.

From December the 25th, 1723, when the Germantown church, the first in America, was organized, to the arrival of Alexander Mack in September, 1729, Peter Becker was at the head of the church in this country. He upheld faithfully the doctrines and ordinances as they had been taught and practiced from the beginning. When Elder Mack arrived and became a member of the Germantown congregation, Peter Becker very considerately and humbly resigned the leadership to the great founder, and placed himself at his disposal to help in the work in any way that he might direct. This act shows the beautiful spirit of the man probably as well as any. He shunned public position and popular applause. After the death of Mack, in 1735, to his death in 1758, circumstances again brought Becker to the front and he conducted the affairs of the little body of worshipers with conscientious care and fidelity.

About ten years before his death he broke up his home in Germantown and moved out into what is

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

now Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, to a place on the Skippack Creek, not far from Harleysville, and made his home with his daughter, Mary Harley.

Although he was a thoroughly good man, Peter Becker was not a great leader or a great organizer. Neither was he a great preacher. Yet his pious, godly life was a powerful sermon to all who knew him. He suffered much for the cause of Christ. He labored long and faithfully for his Master. His influence in establishing the church in this country was very great.

Elder Becker is said to have been an inspiration in any religious service he attended, from the hearty interest he took in the service. He was somewhat skilled as a musician, and generally led the singing at the Germantown meetings.

His nature was fervid and devout. And his even temper under the most exasperating circumstances is a matter of historical record. He was universally loved and esteemed.

He was not a literary man, and therefore has but slight claim upon this history. Letters and an occasional hymn were the extent of his literary labors. One of the latter was printed by Samuel Sower in Baltimore in 1797. It appeared in an appendix to this his second edition of *Das Kleinie Davidische Psalterspiel des Kinder Zions*, a very popular hymn-book of the time.

The following translation<sup>1</sup> will give a fair idea of its form and contents.

---

<sup>1</sup> From a copy in the library of the German Society of Pennsylvania. Text kindly furnished by Miss L. Hertzog, the librarian.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1. Thou, poor pilgrim, wander'st here  
    In this vale of gloom,  
Seeking, longing ever more  
    For that joyous home;  
Yet many friends oppose thee here  
So that now thou weepest sore,—  
    Patience.
2. Go thou forth, on faith rely,  
    Be only undismayed;  
Cling to thy God, his love apply  
    If thee the world upbraid;  
This course through life will lead thee safe,  
Though under it thy flesh shall chafe,—  
    Patience.
3. If upon the narrow way  
    Thou suffer scoffings here,  
Just go on in the path of right,  
    But shun the broad way's snare;  
Though men may look at thee askance  
And thou must often grieve perchance,—  
    Patience.
4. Believe me true the time will be  
    All this shall pass away;  
Contests and strifes shall finally  
    Pass from the mind away  
Of him who here in faith contends  
And all his enemies overcomes,—  
    Patience.
5. Truly wonderful's the strife  
    We engage in day by day,  
Yet many perils we ne'er see  
    That lie along our way;  
Constant watchfulness we need  
With prayer and efforts to succeed,—  
    Patience.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

6. Lead'st thou the strife against the flesh  
And thinkest thou hast won,  
Before thou know, it breaks its leash—  
Again thou'rt overcome.  
Therefore watch, entreat and pray  
And at thy post remain alway,—  
Patience.
7. If at times thy faith is weak  
And thou art full of care,  
Be not by this dismayed, but seek  
Thy God's help everywhere.  
When no other help is found,  
God will compass thee around,—  
Patience.
8. Thy God leads thee most wondrously  
In this bleak desert wide,  
That he may bring to light of day  
What in thy heart doth hide,  
That how thou mayest understand  
Thyself to God to recommend,—  
Patience.
9. And if the way seem still so hard  
Before thy thoughtful mind,  
Look to thy Savior trust his word,  
And vict'ry thou wilt find.  
He chose the way of sorrow free  
And died upon the bloody tree,—  
Patience.
10. Patient was the love of Christ  
Throughout his blessed life;  
This in sincerity he showed  
In every hostile strife.  
As patient as a lamb was He  
That died upon the sacred tree,—  
Patience.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

11. In this mirror thou may'st see  
Thyself, thy form, thy face,  
But think how small thou still must be;  
Forget thou never this:  
Thy Savior's likeness thou should'st gain,  
And suffer gladly every pain,—  
Patience.
12. In this view thou comest short,  
Thou my poor, poor soul;  
Therefore must thou still resort  
Within this gloomy vale.  
Oft dost thou thyself survey  
To find thyself in sorrow's way,—  
Patience.
13. And when thou seem'st deserted quite  
And thy poor heart hast proved,  
Then thou bewailest thy poor plight,  
To pain and anguish moved.  
Help in thyself thou canst not get,  
Submit then gently to thy lot,—  
Patience.
14. Ah, precious soul, take courage new,  
All this shall have an end;  
The cross's load will grace renew;  
Soon blissful rest thou'l find.  
The sorrow of this fleeting time  
Is worthy of the joy divine,—  
Patience.

*Michael Frantz.*

Michael Frantz was one of the strong men in the early days of the Brethren church. He was a native of Switzerland, having been born near the little city of Basle in 1687. As a young man he felt some of

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

the religious unrest that was sweeping over northern Europe in the early years of the eighteenth century.

He came to America at the age of forty, and settled in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, not far from Ephrata. This was in September, 1727. Here he came in contact with the Brethren and was soon attracted to their doctrine and mode of worship. Conrad Beissel was the leader among them at this time in Lancaster county, and some of his mystical utterances had no special attraction for Frantz. And when Beissel withdrew from the congregation the next year Frantz was disappointed and seemed to lose interest.

He occasionally went to hear Beissel preach, however, as he also did the Brethren. Finally in 1734, just seven years after his arrival in Pennsylvania, he was baptized by Elder Peter Becker into the Dunker church. The same day the Conestoga church was organized as a separate congregation, and, as there was no resident minister, he was put in charge as their leader, "with a commission to exhort," which means, that he was chosen as minister of the new organization (probably only on trial) on the same day of his baptism. So well did he approve himself in this capacity that the next year he was ordained to the eldership and put in full charge of the congregation.

He was a man of considerable natural power and great earnestness of character. He gave much of his time to the ministry. Under his care the Conestoga church prospered. From a membership of about twenty, when the congregation was organized, he

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

built it up to two hundred in less than fourteen years. Being already past middle life when he entered the church, he seems to have been anxious to do all he could for the Master while time and opportunity were still allotted to him.

Elder Frantz died in December, 1748. He was buried in an old graveyard on the Cocalico creek near his home, and near the place where he had done such valiant service in the cause of Christ. His epitaph speaks of his having been "well tried by affliction."

He was a fluent writer, and in his busy life found time to write occasional religious poems and a few prose articles. Twenty-two years after his death Christopher Sower brought out a small volume, containing some of each. The work is entitled

*Einfältige  
Lehr-Betraehungen,  
und Kurtzgefasstes,  
Glaubens-Bekäntinsz  
des Gottseligen Lebens,  
Michael Frantzen.*

(Simple Observations on Teaching and a concise Confession of Faith of the pious Teacher, Michael Frantz.)

That Elder Frantz was a very spiritual minded man is evidenced by his address to the congregation on the subject, *Of inner Communion with God*. This is one of the short prose articles appearing in the volume brought out by Sower in 1770.

The communion of the faithful is with the Father

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1. This is the fellowship of the Father with his children, who have inherited from their heavenly Father the celestial heritage and estate, which they fall heir to through Jesus Christ, if they also die with him. They return to the Father again everything that they have received from him, and retain nothing for themselves, but are as those who have nothing and still have everything within. 2 Cor. 6. Since the Father has given them everything through Jesus Christ, therefore they have everything if they are poor in spirit. For all good gifts come from above, from the Father of Lights, which they as his children of light received from him; and through the good gifts from above they also bring to the Father, through the Holy Ghost, spiritual fruits. He gives them spiritual water from above, and this becomes in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. John 4.

This is the true fountain of living faith, which comes through the Holy Ghost, and, springing up, flows forth into eternal life. This is then a river of love coming down from above and returning thither again. Wherever this flood of love comes, there are those who are striving up stream to drink of it at its source. For love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of sincere faith, 1 Tim. 1, and also for a broken heart overflowing with emotion, they receive kindness and consolation; and in kindness they exercise love and sympathy through the divine glory of righteousness, which they manifest towards their former nature. Thus they receive again in return kindness for such kindness, love for love, sympathy for sympathy. John 1. This is communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, because the Father has given to them the divine nature and the complete, holy, virtuous life of Jesus. Because he has given them everything, they give back to him again every-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

thing in love, yes, even their whole hearts. Then he comes and knocks at the door of their hearts and they open to him, and he will sup with them and they with him. O what a precious feast of love and communion do such true, faithful ones have, united with the dear cross-bearing Jesus, and being also in communion with Jesus through love, and in the mortification of the old nature, and in arising with Christ and ascending with him to heaven, where Jesus Christ now is, sitting at the right hand of God!

The prose occupies the latter half of the little volume. The first part is taken up with a series of poems under the general title, *Spiegel und Prufer seine selbst.* (Mirror and Examiner of one's self.)

The poetry is not arranged in stanzas, but in verses rather, something like our Authorized Bible. There are 507 of these verses, in twenty-three different groups, each with its own title, making them in a manner separate poems. Some of the separate titles are, On Water Baptism, On Feetwashing, On Breaking of Bread, On the Groundwork and Bond of Faith, On the Resurrection of the Dead.

The eleventh in order is *On the Bringing up of Children*, which will be found of interest.

### *On Bringing Up Children.<sup>1</sup>*

241. Married people who are in the Lord, learn to punish your children; restrain their naughty ways, and bring them up in the Lord.

242. Fathers should not scold, should not do any-

---

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are taken from a copy of the work in the library of the German Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

thing in anger and hatred ; whoever takes the rod or switch in his hand in anger is Satan's instrument.

243. The rod should not be spared while children are young ; with the most loving stroke should the evil spirit be driven out.

244. He who loves and esteems his child, will punish it and lead it away from the sinful crowd into the fold of Christ, to be in the fear of God, to his own praise.

245. Children should be obedient, should attend carefully their father and mother. This is the first command and advice that is accompanied by divine promise.

246. There is also a lack in the world, that parents love property and money ; your children wish to own land and have never yet known God.

247. He who comes before his children with laughing and acting foolishly and tells of vice and lust in the world, he will lead his children into the world.

248. The earthly-minded father takes his sleep and then rises early with his children to go forth into the world to seek houses, lands, cattle and gold.

249. He says, "There is a fine piece of land, I will bring a claim upon it lest some poor man possess it, who shall no longer be permitted to own land."

250. Or, if he does not actually do the thing as I have described at some time, he is at any rate thinking about it and talking about it, both when he lies down and when he rises up.

251. Many a one does this and many similar things, and has his whole heart in it ; and he acknowledges before this that he is but poorly prepared to pray.

252. He says, "It makes no difference if prayers are neglected and remain unsaid from time to time, if only the heart is in proper condition."

253. A heart that is in proper condition prays and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

praises Jesus Christ at morn, at evening and at midnight, and always with true devotion.

254. The daily sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be offered in the morning and in the evening at a fixed hour: This teaches us very clearly that we should not neglect prayer.

255. Daniel fell upon his knees in prayer, and found it no trouble to do so three times a day; for which faithfulness in prayer he was cast into the den of lions.

256. David also was very anxious to praise God three times in a day, and at midnight he also arose to praise God with heart and voice.

257. He who does not cling to a false ideal will praise God with heart and voice, in spirit and in truth, as Christ, the Son of God, has taught us.

258. Christ and the prophets, as well as the apostles on all occasions, have both early and late exhorted us to prayer most earnestly, by precept and by example.

259. One should pray and entreat and praise God, he should meditate God's Word and discourse upon it with his children at home, when he comes in and when he goes out.

260. When he lies down and when he rises up he should also teach his children to love the Lord, to fear God, and to keep his holy precepts.

261. You, dear children, learn well to fear the Lord, as people should, cling to the dear Lord, know God and keep him ever before your eyes.

262. Make for yourselves plenty of pastime, act out your fine comedies before God by reading, writing, singing joyfully, out of a heart full of love to God.

263. Avoid the companionship of evil men, abstain wholly from the pleasures of youth, from laugh-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

ing, jesting and buffoonery, and from sins of many other kinds.

264. If then you are truly obedient, you will have joy in Jesus, but if your joy is in property and wealth, then are ye children of this world.

265. Now you can choose what you will, but choose Jesus rather than gold, he is a treasure that will remain forever, his spirit animates the children of God.

266. Ye children, be ye born anew, commit yourselves to Jesus and be true, then ye will also have the rights of citizenship, because you are citizens and not slaves.

267. O ye children, all come here, come to Jesus, who is our Lord; give not your youth to the world, give yourselves to Jesus, your hero.

268. How excellent is the yoke of virtue! How noble he who in tender youth takes it upon himself, follows Jesus, and cares for no jesting or offence.

*John Naas.*

John Naas has already been mentioned among the strong leaders of the church in Germany. Besides Alexander Mack there was probably no one who exerted a larger or better influence for the church than he. He was an intimate friend of the founder and enjoyed his complete confidence and esteem.

He was descended from a good Westphalian family, from whom he inherited that native grace and refinement that comes from generations of culture. His educational opportunities were good for his day, and were doubtless well employed. He impresses us everywhere as a man of true culture and sound scholarship.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

His beautiful nature and well-trained mind were also housed in a fine physical organism. He was possessed of unusual manly beauty.

Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh has this interesting account of an incident in his life.<sup>1</sup>

John Naas was a man of commanding figure. In the year 1715, accompanied by Brother Jacob Preisz, he traveled through the country from Creyfelt to Marienborn and Epstein, proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord. At this time Creyfelt was under the control of the King of Prussia. The King's recruiting officers were canvassing the country to secure recruits for the Prussian army. Every one of sturdy appearance was compelled to enter the service. The King was especially anxious to secure tall, strong men for his own body or life guard.

John Naas was just such a man. He was a head taller than any other person in the community, and was possessed of a stout athletic constitution, combined with such grace and nobleness of demeanor as almost to strike a stranger with awe. Preisz, on the other hand, was a small, feeble man.

One day they met the King's recruiting officers, whereupon Naas was seized and urged to enlist. He refused. They tortured him to compel him to submit. These tortures consisted of pinching, thumb-screwing, etc. But he steadfastly refused. They then hung him up with a heavy cord by his left thumb and right great toe, in which painful and ignominious position they meant to leave him suspended until he should yield to their demands.

This did not cause him to consent, and, fearing that they would kill him if they longer continued their

---

<sup>1</sup> History of the Brethren, p. 103.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

barbarous torture, they cut him down and dragged him by force into the presence of the King.

They explained to the King what they had done and told the King how resolutely and stubbornly he withstood their efforts to enlist him. The King eyed Elder Naas closely and said, "Why, yes! We would much like to have him. Tell me why you refuse to enlist."

"Because," answered the noble Christian, "I cannot, as I have long ago enlisted in the noblest and best army; and I cannot become a traitor to my King."

"And who is your captain?" asked the King.

"My Captain," answered he, "is the great Prince Immanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ. I have espoused his cause, and cannot and will not forsake him."

"Neither will I then ask you to do so," answered the noble ruler, handing him a gold coin as a reward for his fidelity. The King then released him.

Naas was born at Norten, not far from Cassel. He joined the church at Marienborn about 1713, being then about forty-two years of age. He was soon put to the ministry and in a short time rose to the leadership of the congregation.

Because of persecutions, the Marienborn church fled to Creyfelt in 1715. Naas accompanied them and was soon after made their elder. In this capacity and during the few following years he did his greatest work. He was possessed of a strong and winning personality that greatly endeared him to the little flock under his care.

Trouble arose, however, in the little congregation. Christian Libe, Naas's colleague in the eldership, insisted on a rigid enforcement of discipline in ecclesiastic-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

tical matters, and succeeded in expelling certain members from the church. His arbitrary action brought about division in the church and filled many hearts with sorrow. Naas was very much opposed to the methods employed by his colleague and withdrew from the neighborhood. This was in 1717. From this time until he came to America in 1733, he was not active in Christian work. His heart had been grieved almost past recovery.

On his arrival in Germantown he was warmly greeted by Alexander Mack, Peter Becker and others. After a short sojourn among the Brethren here he went to Amwell, New Jersey, where he settled and built up a flourishing church.

So once more his splendid powers were brought into the active service of the church. He preached the Word with power and greatly endeared himself to his people. For eight years he labored at this point, and then, having passed his allotted three-score and ten, he was called home. He died in 1741.

He did a good work, and his finely developed powers were sincerely dedicated to the service of his Master. His great heart never forgot the sad mistake at Creyfelt, however, which saddened all the remainder of his life. And what the church lost in the loss of his ministerial services for more than fifteen years, we shall never be able to estimate.

Elder Naas may be called a brilliant man. He had perfect command of his faculties and was able to use them with great power. If he had aspired to authorship he would certainly have gained an audience. As

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

it was, the sphere of his labors was almost limited to those who heard him speak or otherwise came within the range of his influence.

An occasional hymn remains to give us an insight into his mind and heart. Two of these were printed by Samuel Sower in the same volume from which the hymn by Peter Becker above was taken—*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel*. A literal unmetered translation of one of them follows.

### 1

Savior of my soul,  
Grant that I may choose  
Thee and thy cross in this life,  
And surrender myself wholly to Thee.  
Grant that I may choose this,  
Savior of my soul.

### 2

Then by this means shall I  
Be rightly led to the light;  
For Thy entire blessed life  
Led through many crosses, ways of sorrow;  
By this means I shall come  
Also to the true light.

### 3

Extend to me Thy hand;  
I am not in condition  
To follow Thee rightly, O Jesus,  
Without the ointment of Thy soul;  
Therefore extend Thy hand  
To him who is not able to come.

### 4

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
How is it that Thy light,  
In these dark times, is removed

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

So far away and is not at my side?  
Only give me Thy light,  
O Lord Jesus Christ.

5

I am very much encompassed  
By the spirit of the world,  
Which knows how to disguise itself  
Very skillfully, as an angel of light.  
Rescue me, Thy child,  
From this base mob.

6

O Jesus, look within,  
That Thy spirit alone  
May now rule my entire life,  
Glad to go with Thee into death,  
Because the time is passing  
And nothing shall endure.

7

Jesus, Thou, the Word,  
Remainest forever and ever;  
By Thee all things have been created  
That heaven and earth embrace.  
All things will pass away;  
Thou alone remainest secure.

8

Ah, grant me grace  
That I in Thy path may go,  
With a lengthening of my own,  
And in Thee alone may triumph.  
Send me Thy favor,  
That it may prosper me.

9

Oh, I am ashamed  
When I think of Thee,  
How thou hast striven for me

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

And hast overcome the world, the devil, and death.  
I must be ashamed  
When I think of Thee.

10

Since I am often as indifferent  
As a wild animal in the forest,  
I go in the crowds of the world  
And have not my journey directed toward heaven.  
This then makes me sad  
As often as I think of it.

11

Jesus, I entreat Thee,  
Come another time,  
Show to me in spirit Thy wounds,  
Then shall I receive my former happiness.  
Only come again,  
Jesus, I pray Thee.

12

Ah, put me in haste  
By Thy arrows of love.  
Let me be wounded again in heart  
So that I feel sharply the pain  
Of Thy arrow of love.  
Cause me again to hasten.

13

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
It is scarcely any wonder  
That so many souls become doubtful  
And come to the conclusion that,  
As Thou Thyself hast said,  
“My Lord cometh not yet.”

14

When Thou keepest silent  
Things go as they wish;

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

So that men in their own willfulness  
Can perform anything in the flesh.  
Because Thou art silent  
Things go as they wish.

15

God, give Thy law  
To Thy Son, who is  
Also a King upon the earth;  
That soon there may be destroyed  
All of Satan's wiles  
Through Thy righteous law.

16

Jesus, only call  
From the foreign yoke  
Many souls that honor Thee.  
Lord, that Thou wouldst convert them  
So that they would yet come  
Out from the foreign yoke.

17

Lord, Thou hast the power,  
Vindicate Thy honor.  
Most precious King, Jesus Christ,  
It has indeed cost Thy blood;  
Therefore, vindicate Thine honor,  
Lord, it lies in Thee.

*John Hildebrand.*

It is not easy for us of today to understand the extent to which the spirit of mysticism had taken hold of all classes of religious people in the early 18th century. The works of Spener, Hochmann, Boehm and others were extensively read, and the influence of their teaching was felt far and wide. The belief that Chris-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

tianity was merely a matter of the spirit seemed to have an unusual fascination for the people of that day.

Many of our early brethren and sisters were by no means free from the contagion, some unfortunately being affected to the extent of going out of the church. The first division in the church of really alarming proportions, the withdrawal of Conrad Beissel and his adherents in 1728, was caused by this. Many who retained their allegiance to the faith they had espoused were nevertheless influenced by this belief and their peace of mind disturbed because of it.

It took the sturdiest and strongest men in the early days of the Brethren church to stand out boldly against it. Such men were the first Alexander Mack, the two Christopher Sowers, Peter Becker, John Naas, Michael Frantz, and others. Even such great leaders and preachers as Abraham Duboy, Alexander Mack the second, Stephen Koch, Andrew Frey, and many less noted than these, were so shaken in their beliefs by this deceptive doctrine of the spirit that they were many years in adjusting themselves to a rational, consistent basis of Christian faith and practice, if, indeed, some of them ever reached this state at all.

Of this latter class was John Hildebrand. He was a man of quiet and unassuming disposition, and led a peaceable life. Yet the conflicting religious beliefs of his day disturbed him to the end of his life. His discontented spirit never reached a sure abiding place in this world. At one time a member of the Brethren church, later a discontented follower of Beissel, then

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

back to Germantown again and on friendly terms with the Brethren, but whether a member of the church is uncertain, his last days were spent unhappily at Ephrata, where he seems to have been neglected and unappreciated.

Hildebrand was born in Germany in 1679. He joined the church in Europe, and was among the first of the Brethren to come to America. His life was spent quietly at Germantown and Ephrata. He was a preacher of some note, and Alexander Mack's second son, Valentine Mack, was married to his daughter.

Although for many years a member of the Ephrata community he never became closely identified with it. Many of the practices he did not approve of and this led to repeated controversies with the superintendent Beissel. In 1741 he drew up a protest against the practice of applying the title of Father to Beissel. Thus he incurred the latter's disfavor, and the result was that he was never advanced or entrusted with important responsibilities at Ephrata.

He attended several of the synods called by Count Zinzendorf and took an active part in the deliberations. He was a delegate from Ephrata. He later disapproved of the methods pursued by the Count, and withdrew from the synod, refusing to have anything further to do with the movement. He felt that Zinzendorf was trying to entrap the various Protestant denominations into an alliance that would cost them their independence as religious bodies. He therefore turned against him and took part in the pamphlet warfare that was being waged against the Count.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

To this cause he contributed at least four separate publications in one year (1743). The first is entitled "*Wohlgegründetes Bedenken der christlichen Gemeine in und bey Ephrata von dem Weg des Heiligung.*" This was followed by the other three apparently in this order: *Mistisches und Kirchliches Zeugniß der Brüderschaft in Zion; Schriftmäsziges Zeugniß von dem Himmelschen und Jungfräulichen Gebährungswerk; Ein Schreiben der herrnhutischen Gemeine aus ihrer Conferenz an Mistr Johann Hildebrand in Ephrata.* The first three are directed against Zinzendorf and his scheme. The last is directed against the Moravians as a church.

In all of these works Hildebrand shows himself an adept in the use of argument. Not that he is always logical or consistent, but he is always earnest and sincere, and has the faculty of grouping his arguments in a way to make them strong. He seems to us needlessly violent at times, and if he is not always as careful as he might be in the choice of his words, we may be able to make some allowance on the score of earnestness. All four of these books were printed by Christopher Sower, with whom Hildebrand seems always to have been on excellent terms.

A few paragraphs from the second of the works mentioned above will give some idea of Hildebrand's manner, and at the same time show his high ideal as regards the Christian ministry.

It has already been stated that the Levitical priesthood was not able to remit sins; for this reason Christ appeared and instituted an entirely different order of

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

priesthood in the church, not after the order of Aaron but after that of Melchizedek. This new priestly order in the church of the new covenant, under the leadership of the high priest Jesus Christ, is to be conducted by such as he himself has chosen and has qualified for the office by many kinds of sorrows. Since I am aware that this important point is not well understood, it shall be discussed a little at length.

This office may on no account be administered by any mere man, because the government of man does not belong in the church; but it is an office of service which arises out of the mysterious world. Much more does it demand a person who has been prepared for it by the test of great endurance. Because he attracts the attention of the devil by the very nature of his work, he must be a very different person, in a certain respect, from what he appears outwardly, if the devil does not find him. It must not be necessary for him to draw his spiritual nourishment and support from his office; but he must already before this, during his whole life, have become God's own so completely that he is able to spend his time in the quiet present of eternity before God; just as Christ for the sake of the love of God and of his neighbors, came down in the likeness of man to become the means of salvation to them.

The greatest urgency must drive him to this office; it must be the greatest burden of his heart to administer it successfully, so that when the time of assurance comes he can lay it down at the feet of God, raise his hands in innocence and say, "Lord, thou knowest that I am not deserted." Indeed by his faithfulness he must have closed the mouth of justice so that it may become his friend and, in case of need, his advocate. In short, he must have lost his soul and found it again, so that he could lay it down as an anathema for his brethren.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Hildebrand took up his abode at Ephrata in 1739. About 1745, possibly a little earlier, a printing-press was set up there, and one of the first works to be issued from the new press was an English translation of a tract by Hildebrand against the views of marriage as held by the Moravians. Christopher Sower had printed this work in German a few years before. In speaking of this event, the writers of the *Chronicon Ephratense* make this curious remark: "Soon after this a printing-press was set up in the community and the same writing was there printed, by order of the prior, in the English language. Because he had done this of his own accord, however, and soon after left the community, all his acts were disannulled and the English print also committed to the flames."

The prior referred to here was Israel Eckerling, who left Ephrata in disrepute in September, 1745. It appears from this remark that Hildebrand and his little book were made the innocent objects of the vengeance incited by an unpopular prior.

In 1747 Sower brought out another volume of 159 pages entitled, *Enie ruffende Wächter-stimme an alle Seelen die nach Gott und seinem Reich hungerend sind. Oder enie Vorstellung, wie der arme Mensch im göttlichen Leben erstorben und im 4 elementischen Leben aufgewacht. Aus Erfahrung geschrieben Von einem nach Gott und seinem Reich sehenden Herzen.* This is the longest of Hildebrand's works.

John Hildebrand was a ready writer, and in 1764 there was issued from the Sower press another small volume from his pen. It was entitled, *Ein Gespräch*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*zwischen einem Jüngling und einem Alten von dem Nutzen der gottseeligen Gemeinschaften.*<sup>1</sup> (A conversation between a youth and an Old Man concerning the Need of Religious Societies.)

The last topic of the conversation will be found of interest.

Youth.—I am very well satisfied with your answers, but I have one more question. Can a member of the church who is still living give no more aid at all to a disembodied soul after death? Granted that in the case of many a soul, the death struggle with eternal death is so hard that the poor soul in its departure from the body could not fully break through the gate of death, since its faith in and surrender to the Redeemer was still too weak to bind it in confidence securely to him, although it remained bound to him in hope as if by a weak thread of faith; can these souls, then, which have been united together in spirit in this bodily life, no longer be useful, by hearty intercession, to departed souls?

The old man answers.—Yes, certainly, these souls, which have been united in spirit here and retain a good confidence and a hearty interest in one another, can still be useful to a departed soul by means of hearty intercession, whereby it can be strengthened in the thread of faith, by which it still attached itself to its Redeemer on its departure, and by this means attach itself the more securely by the entreaty of others for it. It is very certain that in many a soul true, real faith is still too weak to trust itself completely to Him alone in this mortal combat, because it formerly had so many other supports; and it had not yet become accustomed to do without all these props and to rely

---

<sup>1</sup> Copy in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

upon Him alone invisible, in the spirit, and to embrace Him alone in faith as its Redeemer and remain clinging to him. In the contest of death all the additional supports will fall away, and the Redeemer has not yet received the soul so fully that through his power it can break through death and conquer it. In this way such souls, even after death, can still be useful to those souls with which they have been united in life, by heartily entreating for them that God and their Redeemer may have mercy upon them and come to their aid, to strengthen their faith, so that they may continue to cling, in hope, to their Redeemer. This entreaty will then be an alms to help to steady its spirit, longing for redemption, and bring it to redemption. By so doing it may the sooner obtain power in faith to subdue the will into complete submission and confidence in the Redeemer. In this way, by His power, it can break through death and receive redemption from the bonds of death. Without such hearty supplication, a bare external admission into the church is not sufficient to break the bonds of eternal death, which still holds captive such souls. This the powerful Mediator, Jesus Christ alone, must perform in the souls of those who accept him in faith and cling securely to him. He alone has the key of hell and death; he alone has the power to go into the house of death, to bind the strong enemy, to draw his weapons and take unto himself the devil's prey, that is, the poor imprisoned souls that have surrendered themselves to him by submitting their wills to his will, instead of waiting for their redemption through divine mercy. As regards this no one can give any aid except through sincere entreaty, which, as has been said, unites with the longing of the soul and penetrates into God himself. Then the promise will also be realized in its fulfillment: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them; and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

what they ask, I will give them," Matt. 18: 19, 20. "What they pray for shall be given them of my father." By such persistent supplication the soul may receive additional strength in its longing, and its courage may be increased to hold on the more securely, and to continue doing so until it is ransomed. What is required further for the purification of such a soul will be performed in the habitation to which it is removed, as has been said already. This message was specially impressed upon my heart, and laid upon my understanding by the spirit, by which I have also been urged to write and give it to the public as a testimony of the truth from me, a poor unworthy worm.

The 16th of August, 1754.

John Hildebrand.

*Stephen Koch.*

The mystical tendency so strongly felt in the life of Hildebrand was even more pronounced in that of Stephen Koch. (Cook). This latter was a brilliant man, but he lacked the bed-rock stability of character that was almost a necessity in his day to keep a man steadfastly on his feet. At times he exhibited unusual ardor and enthusiasm in his religious work, at other times he became sulky and depressed, and seemed to lose all interest.

In Germany he was a member of the Creyfelt congregation. As early as 1714 he was already in the ministry actively engaged in proclaiming the Word of Truth. John Naas was the elder in charge at Creyfelt, and he seems to have exerted a wholesome influence upon Koch. He kept his zeal warm and his enthusiasm aglow. Under the encouragement and di-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

rection of Elder Naas, Koch traveled extensively over the Rhine country doing evangelistic work. He was an attractive and forceful speaker, and his efforts were blessed with success.

When Peter Becker organized the first company of Dunkers to come to America in 1719, Stephen Koch was one of the number. The inactivity of these Brethren, however, during the first years of their stay here was disastrous to his zeal. He was present at the organization of the first congregation, at Germantown, and became a member of this congregation. He also attended the first love-feast held in America, on Christmas evening, 1723.

But he had lost his pristine ardor. Koch was a man who needed the steady and directing power of a stronger character. So long as he was under the influence of John Naas he received the stimulus and direction that his nature required. But since coming to America he had found no one who could supply this deficiency in his character. He fraternized with the Brethren still, but showed little interest in the work of the church, or little enthusiasm for the cause.

In the summer of 1726 he, in company with Peter Becker, Henry Traut and others from Germantown, visited some of the Brethren living in the more remote sections of Pennsylvania. Among others they visited the Conestoga congregation, presided over by Conrad Beissel. Thus brought together, Koch and Beissel soon discovered in each other kindred spirits. The spirit of mysticism had already taken hold of both.

Although their relations were at first not entirely

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

cordial, owing to a slight disagreement in regard to some church work, yet Beissel had a charm for Koch and exercised an influence over him that the latter could not resist.

Koch now spent much of his time in the Conestoga region, where the spirit of mysticism was growing more pronounced all the time. When Beissel withdrew from the Dunkers in 1728 and set up for himself, Koch was very much interested in all the proceedings, but still remained with the Germantown church.

He was not at peace, however. Soon after this he began to have strange dreams and visions. He made these known to some of the younger members of the Germantown congregation. They caught the contagion, and soon the mother church was in great excitement. This continued until 1739, when a considerable portion of the first church in America migrated to Ephrata and took up the life of the Sabbatarian hermits. Stephen Koch, who was the real cause of this separation, was one of the number and the rest of his days were spent in the cloister on the Cocalico.

He seems never to have found real happiness or contentment. At times he became despondent and reproached himself as the vilest of sinners. He questioned the sincerity of his conversion, and despaired of attaining to the state of spiritual perfection for which he longed. He died at Ephrata July 7, 1763, after having been in the Christian ministry for about fifty years.

Christopher Sower, in 1744, printed a volume of

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*"Sundry old and new Stories of the Appearance of Ghosts, and something about the Condition of the Soul after Death. Together with several such Stories of Persons who are still living."* Among these were two of Stephen Koch's visions. The popularity of these stories is attested by the fact that other editions of the book were called for in 1748, 1755, and 1792. A copy of the 1755 edition is in the library of the German Society, Philadelphia, and it is from this that I quote.

We came into a land whose beauty and loveliness no man can describe. Yes, I was very much surprised at all that I saw and heard there. For at a distance, I heard the sound of innumerable voices, and all kinds of musical instruments blended in such harmony that it sounded very lovely to me. These words I heard: "He is the only one; to him alone belongs the glory." After this I was brought to a beautiful city, whose streets were of pure gold. Here I saw immense throngs of people, all clothed in white. I gazed at them all in wonder. It seemed to me that they were all hovering in the air and praising God. Yes, they were wafting up and down, and were continually praising and glorifying him who lives forever and ever. Wondering at what I saw and heard, I thought to myself, "Oh, this is the eternal rising and sinking in the bottomless sea of God's love. Oh, how calm! Oh, how good!"

Now he took me and carried me upon a beautiful, high mountain and said, "This is Mount Zion, the castle of David." Then I looked about me as far as I could see, and beheld a beautiful, level valley, with an innumerable crowd of people, all clothed in white, wafting up and down and praising the eternal, good

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

God in an inexpressible manner, and in such sweet melody as no man can describe. I was in great joy at all that I heard and saw. After I had seen and heard this for a time he took me back to the city already mentioned, and when I looked up I saw the vault of heaven wondrously bright and shining. Altogether it was beautiful beyond compare, indescribably glorious, and unspeakably bright.

Since I recognized no one among all these people, I sighed, "Oh, God, if I could only see some one that I know!" Then some one came floating, as it were, towards me, and spake to me in a very friendly manner. "Ah, whence comest thou in thy old body and thy old garments?" I was afraid and replied, "This person has brought me here." He asked me if I knew him. I said, "No." He said, "I am Hochmann, who died at Schwarzenau. Behold now, here is the peaceful kingdom of Zion and the blessed company of redeemed souls, of whom thou hast heard me speak before this when I was still with you. Here is the earth, which Jesus said the meek shall possess. This is different from the old world, for the souls that follow the Lord Jesus through distress and sorrow patiently to the end, enter this blessed place of rest." After these words he seemed to be flying away from me. But I was in very deep thought. I heard a sigh and wished that I could see some one else whom I had known in life.

Then again I saw a person come flying towards me. She spoke to me in a friendly manner and said: "Stephen, how comest thou here in thy old garments and thy old body?" I replied, "This person has brought me here." She asked me if I knew her. I said, "No." She said, "I am Benzin" (an aged widow) "who formerly lived among you." (She died in Germantown.) "Thou seest now, I am in this place of blissful rest, of which I have so often

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

talked with thee. In those days I often felt a little of this place, when my soul sank into God; but it never lasted long, and I became distracted again; and in renewed restlessness I had to seek for rest again, until I entered into this place of rest and peace; yes, a place of everlasting blessedness, where there is no more change or fear of change. To God, who is worthy of all love and praise, be glory forever!"

Then she was lifted up from me and ascended up towards the beautiful vault of heaven until I could no longer see her. But as long as I could hear her voice, I heard unspeakable words in praise of God.

*Andrew Frey.*

Of the early life of Andrew Frey nothing is definitely known. We cannot be certain when he joined the church or when he came to this country. In 1728 the Falckner's Swamp congregation was organized and Andrew Frey was put in charge as elder. This is the first positive information we have about him.

This, it will be remembered, was during the same year that Beissel left the church, and already the relations between him and the recognized leaders of the church were severely strained. Frey stood steadfastly with the Germantown, Coventry and other congregations against the innovations that were being introduced by Beissel.

As a loyal and representative member of the Dunker church Frey was sent as a delegate to the Zinzen-dorf synods. He took a leading part in the deliberations, and was esteemed by the representatives of the various denominations for his fairness and liberal-mindedness. Finally, when trustees for this new order

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

of mysticism were to be chosen, Frey was one of the three elected.

The mystical tendency of his thought now became more marked. And the man who had stood out resolutely against the mysticism of the Cocalico region as promulgated by Beissel now gave way before the blandishments of Zinzendorf. The Count of course knew the value of such a man as Frey to the Moravian cause, and doubtless used all his persuasive powers to bring about his conversion. The result was that Frey left the church and joined the Moravians.

Not long after this the Count sailed for Europe in the interest of his schemes, and Frey with others accompanied him.

He was not with them long, however, until his eyes were opened to some things that he had not known before. He soon found many things in their practices to criticise. He became discontented, dissatisfied, and finally disgusted. Once his confidence was lost and his resentment aroused, he could oppose his new religious creed as vigorously as he had formerly advocated it.

He spoke out freely his opposition. This brought on repeated controversies with the Count and others of his adherents. Some of these were exceedingly bitter. Finally Frey withdrew from those with whom he found himself no longer in accord and sailed for America.

He returned to those from whom he had gone out and, having made proper acknowledgments, was again received into fellowship.

He never was quite able to forget the mistreatment

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

he had received at the hands of the Moravians, as it seemed to him. After his return he wrote a book, in which he gave to the public his experiences and observations. It is one of the most vigorous pieces of writing that I have met with in our early church literature.

The book is entitled,

*Andreas Freyen  
seine  
Declaration,  
oder:  
Erklärung,  
Auf welche Weise und wie er  
unter die sogenante  
Herrnhuter Gemeine Ge-  
kommen;  
Und warum er wieder davon abgegangen  
Nebst der Beweg-Ursache, warum ers publiciert.  
Germantown gedruckt bey Christoph Saur,  
1748.*

(Andrew Frey's Declaration, or Explanation as to how and in what manner he became a member of the Moravian Church, and why he left it again. Together with the particular Reason why he publishes it. Germantown, printed by Christopher Sower, 1748.)

Frey found many things to criticise the Moravians for. I have made several extracts from his book, not for the purpose of calling attention to the nature of his quarrel, which can fortunately, however, do no harm at this late day, but to illustrate his method as a thinker and writer.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> From a copy in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Once all the brethren and sisters who had come from Pennsylvania held a love-feast. Then the Count (Zinzendorf) told each one what he thought of him. When he came to me he said, "Brother Andrew has indeed a bright countenance," but he took note of me that I had something that disturbed me on my mind so that I was not always contented. This was so. For I was compelled to see and hear many things that made me sad. Meanwhile I did as well as I could, but this was only tolerable, till the spring of 1746. Then the Count together with his family and the most eminent members of the pilgrim church went to Holland to attend the synod. From there they went to England and were gone about a half year before they returned. In May was the birthday of the Count. They wrote about this from Holland to those at Marienborn, and ordered that on this day the ducal palace should be illuminated. This was done in the following manner.

They brought great wagonloads of green bushes and decorated the hall of the palace (which is called Bethlehem, and is one hundred feet long and forty feet wide) so that it was completely green within, and hung there brazen lamps in it, each with seven lights. There were also four columns erected in the hall, which were hung full of lights, arranged in waves or coils like a serpent or snail. Letters of the alphabet two feet long or longer were made of wood, and were arranged so as to spell the name *Ludwig von Zinzendorf*. These were covered with gold and placed upon the wall, and were hung full of lights. The couches upon which the people sat were covered with fine linen and were artistically decorated with silk ribbons. There was a table, made in keeping with the letters of the name in whose honor the feast was celebrated. A cake was baked as large as could be baked in a bake-oven. As many holes were made

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

in this cake as the person whose birth it celebrated was years old. A candle was placed in each hole and one in the middle. Without, in the yard, many decorations were made of leaves and flowers. Here again the name of the Count was hung up and filled with lights. Altogether lights had been provided by the thousands, and it was so arranged that they were all lighted at one time, without and within the hall. Furthermore all the windows on the front side of the palace were filled with lights, so that the palace looked in the darkness like pure fire. Songs of praise were composed in honor of the Count, filled with such exclamations of joy that I never could have believed that there are people who would accept such honor and exaltation from men, as were given at this feast and have often been given since. These were sung by several thousand persons, accompanied by music supplied by a whole host of musicians, something like what might have been expected at the court of a heathen king. Of such things at least I have several times heard but have never seen, and they will never be seen by persons who obey Christ and crucify their flesh together with their lusts and desires. Such feasts of revelry were held after this eight times a year, as follows: in honor of the Count, in honor of the Countess, in honor of the Count's son, in honor of each of the three young countesses; also in honor of Anna Nitschman, and of John of Wattenville, the Count's son-in-law. This was to nearly all people a new affair, for other persons came also and looked on this lust of the eye, this carousing, this vain show, this wasteful prodigality. As such it was commonly reported at Frankfort and other neighboring places. It soon became a great scandal and object of ridicule, for it did not at all harmonize with the teaching of Christ when he said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and may

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

glorify your Father who is in heaven." It seemed at this time, as if a spirit of intoxication or abandonment had been poured out over the community. Young folks began to be light-minded and giddy beyond measure, as was shown by their laughing and jesting and naughty jumping about. One young man threw another to the ground; then they wrestled to hold each other down until they had so exhausted themselves that they could no longer get their breath. And what was still worse,—but this is too bad to tell . . . I said, "Such foolish lightmindedness I have never seen in all my days at any guardroom among the soldiers."

This is one of the fruits of their celebrated church discipline; yes, one of the fruits of the perfectly natural and free manner of life, from which all piety has been removed, of which they have spoken so often in their public meetings, saying they would not stop until they had rooted every vestige of sanctimoniousness out of the church, root and branch. They would have an entirely natural manner of living.

Want of simplicity was, however, by no means Frey's only charge. He likewise accused the Moravians of insincerity and of being foolishly conceited as regards their religious condition. A few paragraphs of this will be in place.

The Count once said here in Pennsylvania, that the apostle Paul had complained that he had no one who was exactly of his mind except Timothy. He, however, could say that he had at least twenty-four brethren who were completely of one opinion with him. Who knows how many there are now! He also set his church far above the early Christians. I once heard one of his workmen say, "Papa is such a man that I do not know whether there has ever been an-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

other such a one in the world before him." If the apostle Paul should, however, come into the church, he would look at them with astonishment in comparison with the church of his time.

I was once talking with a great scholar named Lieberkühn about King David, and remarked what a hero of faith he had been. He laughed and said, "David may have been a pious man according to the law and may have had many fine things in his head, but he had nothing in his heart. A humble brother who goes to the Lord's supper would be far above David." When all the brethren agree in their drunken delirium, then it is easy to imagine that it does not cost them much to exalt their affairs and recollections above the things of the Bible, in their drunkenness. Because I regarded your action according to my understanding before the action of mad men, it is no wonder that they consider me as a fantasy.

I knew a brother who in early life had an awakening, and for a long time acknowledged it as such under the correcting hand of mercy. When he would occasionally make a mistake, either in word or deed, he would feel himself accused by the sentinel of chastising grace. When the workmen then asked him as to the condition of his heart, he made known to them his condition. He said he was often in prayer to the Lord. On this account he felt a sense of chiding and uneasiness in his mind. His workmen gave him this advice, that he should not admit any thoughts about anything, no matter what. This poor man followed the advice of his laborers and in a short time came into such a false state of freedom and security, that he appeared as wanton and saucy as if he were crazy. He went about saying that the Bible was a book of pietism, and that he had plagued himself long enough with it. If he only would never have to see it again, he would be as happy as the seraphim.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

In summarizing he makes some vigorous statements.

I think that all that I have related up to this time is sufficient ground for me to say that this is the most godless sect that has appeared upon the earth since the time of the apostles. This statement Joseph Muller received from me with very great disfavor, and reported it again to those who had sent him to me from time to time, in order to learn how I was disposed towards them. He was the most suitable for this office because he had been my steward.

I had now learned to know the church sufficiently well. Its beautiful mantle of the sufferings of Christ was too narrow and too short to cover this beautiful child, because the conspicuous stature of the Lamb had been lost, and besides the dragon mouth had been opened wide against God, to the slander of his name and of his charge (namely the hearts of true believers) and those that already dwell in heaven. For Christ says, "He who despises you, despises me, and he who despises me, despises him that sent me."

Some time after the book was printed a rumor got abroad that Frey had repented of his having written it. He promptly assured the public, however, that this was not so. In the issue of Sower's newspaper for April 20, 1750, he wrote:

Ah me! When I was very ill, so that all present thought I should soon die, I experienced a feeling of joy in my heart that I had steadfastly refused any recantation against this religious fraud. . . . And I say in truth before the Lord that it has never come into my mind to recall what I have written.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

### *Alexander Mack, Jr.*

The second Alexander Mack was the youngest son of the organizer of the Brethren church, and was a worthy namesake of his illustrious father. Into his hands came much of the responsibility of carrying forward the work his father had started. And because of the fidelity with which he conducted it, his name deserves to be recorded along with that of his great ancestor.

He was born at Schwarzenau in 1712, less than four years after the church had been organized. Thus from infancy he was brought up, as it were, in the church. When the Schwarzenau congregation had to flee the country in 1720, because of persecution, he, as an eight-year-old boy, accompanied his parents into West Friesland. In this country and in Holland the exiles remain nine years. Persecutions continued, however, to drive them from place to place. During this period he joined the church. According to Elder James Quinter<sup>1</sup> he was baptized in his seventeenth year. This being so, 1728 is the year that marks the beginning of his Christian life. The church at this time was sojourning in Holland. So it is not true that Alexander Mack, Jr., joined the church in Germantown, as the statements have usually had it.

When the original Schwarzenau congregation, in order to rid themselves of the continual old-world persecutions, decided in 1729 to try their fortune in the American wilderness, Alexander Mack the second

---

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of Alexander Mack.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

was one of the number who came. For the next six years his father was at the head of the church in this country and was presiding elder of the Germantown congregation. During all this time young Mack was very closely associated with his father, and enjoyed the unusual advantages of his conversation and wise counsel.

The death of his father in 1735 cast a deep gloom over the young man. His spirit became restless. The mystical influences with which he had been surrounded all his life were beginning to exercise their power over him. The prudent counsel of his father was now wanting.

Stephen Koch was at this time in the flood-tide of his ecstatic dreams and visions. He told some of them to Alexander Mack. This only increased his spiritual unrest. He and Koch became intimate friends. This friendship brought Mack into close association with Henry Hoecker, John Riesmann and others strongly tainted with mysticism. By their intercourse with one another they simply confirmed each other in their common vagaries and religious excesses.

In 1737 these four enthusiasts, with perhaps another or two, erected a small house about a mile from Germantown, where they established themselves as hermits. Here they gave themselves to prayer, fasting and meditation. Koch continued to have his ecstatic visions, and the rest were in close mental and spiritual affinity with him. This was of course a decisive step in the direction of Ephrata, and we are not surprised

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

that in the spring of the next year most of the company joined the mystic Brotherhood on the banks of the Cocalico.

But these were days of turmoil at Ephrata. The solitary Brethren were quarreling and bickering among themselves. Beissel was still at the head of affairs, but Israel Eckerling was trying to oust him and secure the reins of government in his own hands. The controversy waxed bitter, and spread until nearly all the cloisterites were arrayed on one side or the other. Mack took the side of Eckerling.

It would not seem that this was a state of affairs well suited to promote religious contemplation or the growth of spirituality. Yet these were the avowed objects of the community. It is not to be presumed that Mack found here the religious consolation that his soul craved. He was restless and discontented. He participated in the religious extravagances by which he was surrounded to the full, but this indicates, I think, rather his unsettled condition than any real interest in what he did. His soul had lost its anchor and he had not yet found a sure footing.

In 1744 the controversy had become so bitter that Eckerling decided to leave Ephrata for a time, hoping that by so doing a reaction might set in in his favor during his absence. Accompanied by Alexander Mack and one or two others he started eastward, passing through Amwell, New Jersey, to Brunswick on the Atlantic. Here they took boat for Rhode Island. Thence they passed through Connecticut to New York; from there back to Ephrata.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

They were gone several months, and preached at every place they stopped. They were generally received with kindness and hospitably treated, although on several occasions they were taken for Spanish friars and came near being thrown into prison. This was the case in New York. They escaped prosecution only by the chance that the magistrate, before whom they were brought on a charge of disturbing the peace, happened to know one of the party and so discharged them.

A short time after their return to Ephrata the old feud broke out again with redoubled ardor, and Beissel succeeded in having an act of banishment passed upon Eckerling. This brought matters to a crisis, and Eckerling decided to leave Ephrata forever. He plunged into the frontier forests and traveled to the southwest four hundred miles. Here on the banks of the Great Kanawha in West Virginia he built a cabin and made his abode.

These facts would perhaps not call for record here were it not for the fact that in this wild exploit he was again accompanied by Alexander Mack. Eckerling's brother Samuel was also of the party. They left Ephrata in September, 1745. They lived in the forest a number of years. The fate of the Eckerlings is not certain. It has generally been thought that they were murdered by the Indians during the French and Indian War. Another account has it that they were captured by the French in this war and carried off to Canada, whence they were later transported to France. No matter. They are chiefly of interest

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

to us here as examples of the religious excesses to which so many people of their time gave way.

Alexander Mack does not seem to have remained with the company very long. His frontier experiences soon brought him to his senses. How long he remained in the forest we have no way of knowing. But in 1748 he was back in Germantown again, a member of the Brethren church, and enjoying the full confidence of the congregation. This is shown by the fact that on the 7th of June in this year he was elected to the Christian ministry and given the oversight of the congregation. Christopher Sower, Jr., was elected at the same time and associated with him in this office. Such weighty responsibilities would not have been entrusted to anyone who had not given evidence of his trustworthiness. So it is probable that his stay with the Eckerlings in the Great Kanawha Valley was of very short duration.

After some eight years of religious excesses that are almost unusual for their extravagance, young Mack once more came to himself, and his storm-tossed soul found peace and comfort in the religion of his father. He again came to his own and his own received him gladly. Now began a life of usefulness to the church and to the cause of Christ that compares favorably with those of the greatest leaders in the early years of our history.

Shortly after being called to the ministry he married. Thus an additional steady and supporting power came into his life. His wife was Elizabeth Nice. She had also been at Ephrata for a short time,

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

but seems to have left in disgust. The marriage was celebrated on New Year's day, 1749. Christopher Sower, who was now Mack's collaborer in the Germantown church, performed the ceremony.

Under the direction of these two talented young ministers the church at Germantown flourished. In addition to the regular preaching service, there was an afternoon meeting for the young people. Out of this developed the Sunday school. These meetings from which it developed were conducted by the Brethren at Germantown fully forty years before Robert Raikes organized the first Sabbath school in England.

So successful was the work of Mack and Sower that on June 10, 1753, they were both ordained to the eldership. They were close personal friends, and were deeply interested in the work of the church. They planned their work together, and each gave a good proportion of his time to advancing the borders of Zion.

Mack was a man of fine physique, not very large but well proportioned and athletic. He was a vigorous, active man, both physically and mentally. He lived more than ninety years; and at the age of eighty-two, is said to have walked ten miles in one day.

By trade he was a weaver. He was also interested in some of the factories connected with the Sower printing establishment. About 1770 the second Christopher Sower added to his equipment a type foundry. Alexander Mack may have had a financial interest in this. At least he was so elated at the success attained in casting type that he composed a poem of a

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

hundred stanzas in commemoration of the event. It was entitled *Reim-Gedicht für die Liebe Jugend*. The celebration of youth in this poem may indicate that the young sons of Christopher Sower were also interested in the enterprise. The poem was published in the *Geistliches Magazien*, Vol. II, No. 12. At the close this statement appears: *Gedruckt mit der ersten Schrift die jemals in America gegossen worden.* (Printed with the first type ever cast in America.) This statement ought to settle forever the controverted question as to when the Sowers began to make their own type.

Alexander Mack was a fluent writer. He wrote extensively in both prose and verse. He is the most distinctly literary man in the Dunker church before the Revolution. The pen was his natural medium of expression. He carried on an extensive correspondence, and many of his letters are still in existence. They breathe a noble, charitable spirit that reveals at once the godly life and the manly character of the man who wrote them.

Passing by the letters and the more fugitive pieces, I can now only speak of the more important of his literary works. About 1760 there appeared from the Sower press a work from his pen entitled: *Eine Anmuthige Erinnerung zu einer Christlichen Betrachtung von der Wunderbaren Allgegenwart des Allwissenden Gottes.* This tract on "A kind Admonition to a Christian Consideration of the wonderful Omnipresence of the Omniscient God" contained seven octavo pages. It bears Sower's imprint but no date. It may, there-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

fore, have appeared a little later than the assigned date.

He made several contributions to Sower's *Geistliches Magazien*. Numbers 34 and 36 are filled with poems from his pen. The latter number contains a single poem of 440 lines divided into eight-line stanzas. It is entitled, *Warnung vor Selbst-Mord, und Wichtigkeit der Lebens-Frist*. An imperfect translation of some of the stanzas follows.<sup>1</sup>

The waters in the sea  
Can nowhere be confined;  
They run and ebb and flow  
The abysmal depths to find.  
The currents hasten forth,  
Press to their destined goal,  
Just as the Lord directs  
They obey his every word.

The spring and harvest time,  
The summer and the winter  
And the elemental strife  
Still follow the poor sinner.  
Oh! Oh! the brief, brief time  
Grows shorter day by day,  
Drives us into the grave  
And into eternity.

We are hurled out of time,  
Like lively water jets,  
Into the eternal sea,  
Where we must ever be.  
O sinner, only think,  
Fall down before your God

---

<sup>1</sup> From copy in the library of the German Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

In faith and penitence  
While yet time is allowed.

The flowers of many kinds,  
The plants of dale and field,  
The withered herb and grass,  
The foliage from the wood—  
These all at once proclaim  
Of the eternal past  
And of the too short time  
For an important choice.

He whom God's counsels please,  
Who loves God's holy ways,  
Will in life's pilgrimage  
Be trained in many ways.  
God's covenant of grace  
Brings copiously again,  
In every separate hour,  
Life's misery and pain.

He who lays hold on God  
In faith and bonds of love,  
O'ercomes his every trial  
With blessings from above.  
The death of saintly men  
Is worth our note, whereby  
They enter into rest  
To God's eternal joy.

When now a child of man,  
In this brief course of life,  
Bethinks himself to whom  
His service he will give,  
To God or the Enemy;  
Then numbered are the days  
Appointed by his Friend  
For this important choice.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Likewise he who serves  
The Fiend with every power  
And fails to reconcile  
Himself in time to God;  
Of him God wants repentance  
And gives him time thereto,  
That he may yet do penance  
Before he's lost for aye.

But he who penance does  
And struggles with his sin,  
Him God himself makes strong  
That he may finally win,  
Shows him the honored crown  
And so draws out the time  
That he in contest dire  
This jewel bright may win.

Therefore we should regard  
Time highly to be prized;  
Ah, that which God provides  
Should never be despised.  
Who can unto himself  
A single week procure?  
My friend, accept in love  
What God provides for you.

Ah, many a year has passed  
And many a day has flown,  
And yet your mind and heart  
True happiness has not known.  
Say, "I have basely sought,  
And yet 'tis worthy of note  
That God still grants me time  
To bring forth better fruit."

Who would with his own hand  
Cut short the fleeting time,  
And hurl himself with shame

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Into eternal ruin,  
While the trusty hand of God  
Is still stretched out to him  
And the span of life  
Is graciously extended?

True, often does the prospect  
Seem dark in this poor world;  
But he who gave new life  
In the house of mourning,  
He, by his hand, which holds  
And bears and moves all things,  
Can also lightly change  
Our every condition.

How often does it happen,  
He who complains at even  
And cannot understand  
The Misery which grieves him,  
Soon finds himself recovered,  
Feels joy and happiness  
In the early morning hour  
Come back into his breast?

If 'tis not always thus  
Can here not long avail;  
The saddest prophet said,  
"Need must devour need,  
Day drives away the night,  
Night drives away the day."  
So is it with our trouble,  
And that which makes us sad.

He who has learned to mourn  
Shall truest joys embrace,  
Which always shield us from  
The pitch and sulphurous lake.  
O royal blest today!  
O noble time of grief!

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Prophet of eternity,  
Joys untarnished follow thee.

Who would so foolish be  
As not to trust his God,  
But build upon the empty void  
Of his worst enemy,  
Who'll hurl into perdition  
This old deluded world  
And hold his opposition  
In bonds of slavery?

Therefore take courage new  
Ye grief-beridden souls;  
Through blood of Christ proclaim  
A victory you attain.  
May you as conquerors stand,  
Give God alone the praise,  
Obey his holy Word  
And seek the fatherland.

Ten years after the destruction of the Sower printing-press, two works from the pen of Alexander Mack were printed at Ephrata. *Anhang zum widerlegten wiedertanfer*, or Appendix to the Refuted Anabaptists, was a small work and probably appeared early in the year 1788. As if dissatisfied with his effort Mack set about more resolutely and prepared his now famous defense of the principles and ordinances of the church, which he entitled *Apologia, or Scriptural Answers to certain Truths*, etc.

This work was published at the expense of the church, as the imprint states, from which fact we may infer that it was fully endorsed by that body as a sound exposition of her principles. It is undoubted-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

ly the ablest defense of the doctrines of the church that appeared before the beginning of the nineteenth century. The volume contains seventy-one large octavo pages, beautifully printed. The argument is carried on by means of a conversation between a father and son, a common expedient among the early writers of the church.

A paragraph can give a very imperfect idea of its style or its masterly argument, but this is all I can quote here. It will give some idea at least of the author's power to strip a subject of all sophistry and strike right at the heart of the matter.<sup>1</sup>

That the dear friend has taken great pains to establish his pet doctrine of infant baptism upon several precepts in the holy Bible is easy to be seen in his whole discourse, I admit, and has awaked in me, as was natural, a holy reverence for the sacred Word of the Lord our God. Meanwhile the lovers of Jesus honor the straight and narrow way upon which the Master himself has traveled. The laws of their God are dear and precious to them, because they know that the Lord himself has established them forever, Psa. 119: 152. When shrewd people wish to found other practices and rites upon the Bible, they will find no place where they can erect them. If they search with their acute intellects through the evidences of the Bible, they can find no trace of such teaching in it. If one wishes to read something on the subject of infant baptism, he is compelled to open the work of some shrewd man. If he closes this and turns to the Bible he finds nothing there; and when someone half quotes a Bible passage, by which he hopes to give his idea

---

<sup>1</sup> From a copy in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

an appearance of probability, the anabaptists open their Bibles and together they find just the opposite of the meaning which was sought to be wrested from it. It appears very unreasonable then to a lover of truth, that anyone should thus misconstrue God's Word. If a so-called anabaptist should say, the baptism of Christ avails nothing at all, they would think, good God have mercy on him and his teachings that he may be converted so that he may be delivered.

During the same year in which the two last named works were issued at Ephrata, Peter Leibert at Germantown printed a little volume of poetry by several authors, one of whom was Alexander Mack. The work was entitled, *Etliche Liebliche und erbauliche Lieder: Von der Herrlichkeit und Ehre Christi. Von der Starken und Mächtigen Liebe Christi. Germantown Gedruckt bey Peter Leibert, 1788.*

Following is one of the poems by Mack rendered almost literally. Of course it loses immeasurably in the translation.

### Closing Song.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Christ, God's holy Son,  
To thee be praise and honor given!  
Thou who sitt'st upon the throne  
Round which myriad angels hover,  
Whose holy guard by thousands told  
Are multiplied ten thousand fold.

Holy Lord, bless thou the church  
Which has prospered through thy blood;  
Consecrate us to thy Word  
Since for us thyself hast died;

---

<sup>1</sup> Volume in library of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Thou hast us so much esteemed,  
Thou'st numbered us with the redeemed.

Lord, heed thou the call and station  
    Of thy lambs, thy members true;  
Learn to know them truly, fully,  
    And collect them soon anew;  
By the power of thy will  
Strengthen them with knightly skill.

Lord, raise thou thy holy brow  
    Give to us thy blessed peace  
May the light of thy dear eye  
    Shine forever in our midst.  
Lead thy lambkins by thy side,  
Be their constant shield and guide.

Peter Leibert printed an edition of *Der Kleine Kempis* in 1795. This was a popular book, having been issued several times before this by the Sower press. Leibert's edition differed from its predecessors, however, in that it contained a collection of poems at the end. The volume contains 180 pages, the last 35 of which are given to the poems. Among them are at least two by Alexander Mack. The substance of one of them follows.<sup>1</sup>

1. A soul that loves the Lord its God, finds sorrow in this world: and what it loves aside from Christ, brings misery and woe. Therefore Jesus calls to you, "Come, in me is joy and peace."

2. "I have overcome the world," Jesus says consolingly; "have put in chains your strongest foe by the glory of my might." Therefore calls he ever and ever, "Precious souls, come unto me."

---

<sup>1</sup> Copy in the library of Bridgewater College.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

3. Wealth and riches, let them lie, wheresoe'er they chance to be; seek thou only joys eternal, where worldly pleasures are no more. My advice brings wealth in God, likewise, too, the devil's scorn.

4. True, the world says, "Jesus' teaching is not so to be construed, that one is under obligation in all things to follow,"—In poverty especially, this would be too wonderful.

5. But Christ Jesus knows his own, he is near akin to them; where they seem entirely lost, is he apt to appear to them, like the good and faithful shepherd to his lambs that went astray.

6. All the words of his wise counsel seem to them like sugar sweet; their delight, their greatest joy's in the steps of his blest feet. He's their shepherd, they are his, despite what men may counsel them.

7. To repeat the words of Christ, in his steps to follow free, Jesus' words to trust alway, to the world brings bold offense. But the mind toward heaven bent brings heavenly joy and content.

8. The lambs of Christ kiss eagerly the feet of their shepherd Lord, precious all his teachings are, and sweet as honey his Word. The spirit and Word of Christ are ever their freedom and law.

9. All the flowers that scent the air, according to the law of God, give them pleasure abundantly, because they nourish them. They need no other source of strength than Jesus' spirit and power.

10. What pertains to Jesus' love reeks of his precious blood; what awakes a desire for virtue makes the sad heart gay. What disturbs the realm of Satan is honored evermore.

A very interesting letter of Alexander Mack's was printed by Samuel Sower in Baltimore in 1799. The letter is not personal but was intended for general circulation among the churches. It treats of the time

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

for the observance of the rite of feet-washing at the love-feast. It was written late in life, and is the well-seasoned advice of an aged veteran of the Cross upon a topic then somewhat controverted. The letter breathes a beautiful spirit of forbearance and long-suffering and charity.

The first part of the letter enumerates the evidences from the various New Testament writers as to the time for observance. The latter part is taken up with the fatherly counsel of the old patriarch of the church as to the best way of treating controverted questions. His advice is so good that it is well worth repeating.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally true, when a man takes it into his mind to do something, and determines to do it, that he does not care to have it said, that he disputes with great wisdom about the shell of a question but misses the kernel entirely. Therefore, dear brethren, let us all be wise, especially in the consideration of feet-washing. Let us observe how men should be disposed towards great things: in love and peace and humility they should submit to one another. For Christ has indeed not given any special command when this rite shall be observed, before or after the supper; but he has commanded that we shall observe it, and also love each other. Christ did not say, that by washing of feet or by breaking of bread his disciples should be recognized, but he said. "By this shall every man know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

---

<sup>1</sup> The letter was printed in a volume containing Felbinger's Christliches Hand-Buchlein and Alexander Mack's Rites and Ordinances and Ground-Searching Questions. Copy in the library of Bridgewater College.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

O how Satan might justly mock us if we should pass the time in quarreling with one another, when the ordinance of feet-washing should be observed. Love would be destroyed, yes, even the ordinances of God's house would be reduced to nothingness, and peace would be lost. This would be exceedingly pleasing to Satan, and the teachings of Jesus would become a mockery to mankind. Therefore it is of the greatest importance that we remain in love and peace, and pray the dear God for a constant increase of wisdom; for I can in truth say this from experience, that at first we washed feet after the meal and after the breaking of bread, and did it in all blessedness and growing love; later we examined the Word more closely, and then in blessedness washed feet after the meal and before the breaking of bread. After this, when the grace of the New Testament was given to us still more fully, and a brother came among us who understood Greek and explained to us in order that Jesus had washed feet before the meal, we acted upon our greater light and have ever since observed this rite before the supper is eaten.

Now no brother will blame us for not beginning again to restrict ourselves; but so long as no one can give us better reasons for our practice, no one will censure us for performing the rite as we understand it.

I will also say this, that if I should come into an assemblage of the Brethren who wished to break bread, and the leaders of the congregation did not understand the ordinance otherwise than that the feet should be washed after the meal, I would observe the ordinance with them in love and peace. Afterwards, however, I would explain it to them according to the Scriptures, but would wait in love and have patience with them until they should likewise see it so; for I am sure, that when we look at the matter altogether impartially, and continue in love and peace, we shall

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

be able to see and understand that it is just as I have shown above: namely, that when the meal was prepared Jesus arose and washed his disciples' feet, then sat down and ate; and during the eating he revealed the betrayer, who then went out. After this Jesus first instituted the ordinance of breaking bread, and so the Scriptures show one after another; both the types of the pious fathers before the Law and also everything under the Law harmonizes therewith.

A person can stand before God and man with a perfectly clear conscience, although he may think that the ordinance of feet-washing should be observed immediately after the meal. I did not venture to maintain such a thing, in view of the sensible meaning of the Scriptures, even though one might do it with difficulty. If the two evangelists, Matthew and Mark, are compared, they are found to write the same thing. First, Matthew 26: 26 says, "But as they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it." So wrote also the evangelist Mark, Chap. 14: 22, "And while they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body.'" Now we see here very clearly that between the eating of the paschal lamb and the breaking of bread nothing at all took place.

If the feet-washing had taken place between these two events, they would certainly also have written about it; but because it took place before the meal they have not mentioned it but have left it out. John, however, has described the feet-washing and has, on the other hand, omitted the institution of the breaking of bread. The Scriptures require spiritual eyes, mind, and understanding for their interpretation, otherwise people will get from the sacred Word only misery and distraction, if they endeavor, without true enlightenment, to construe the language literally at one place, and at another place do just the reverse.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Therefore, dear brethren, let us watch and be prudent; and above all things, let us maintain charity as one guards the apple of his eye. For the spirit of wisdom points out in the first epistle of John, Chap. 2: 10, that he who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no offense in him. Likewise also the good God, who is pure, impartial love, he is willing and able to restore, time and again, what may be wanting in our knowledge of this or that. Now I close, and pray all the Brethren once more to have forbearance, and consider all such questions in love and with a quiet spirit; I am then your humble brother,

Alexander Mack.

*Christopher Sower, Jr.*

Reference has already been made to Christopher Sower the Second in connection with the Sower publishing interests. We have seen that as a publisher his career was conspicuous and eminently successful, and that his plant at Germantown was the most complete and influential German printing establishment in colonial America.

His nature was too large, however, to be limited to one kind of interest. He was not only a very successful business man, but his public spirit led him into various kinds of public enterprises. The cause of education found in him a powerful patron. He was also interested in securing good roads, paving streets, and providing asylums for the indigent and afflicted. Moreover he was elder of a church and pastor of the Germantown congregation. He touched life at many points, and always in a way to leave it the better for the contact.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Sower was born in 1721, on the 26th of September, in the little town of Laasphe in Witgenstein, whence his father migrated to this country three years later. After spending two winters in Germantown, we have seen him accompany his father and mother to the Mühlbach valley in the spring of 1726. And five years later we have seen him return with his father to Germantown.

Little Sower was now in his tenth year, and he must go to school. There were several good German schools in Germantown, and his father chose for him the one kept by the somewhat whimsical pedagogue, Christopher Dock. Dock was a man of original ideas. He was also an honest, sincere soul, and his pious manner of life would be a wholesome example for any boy. He was also a man of splendid intelligence and good scholastic attainments.

In this school Sower laid the foundation for broad culture and sound scholarship. He imbibed a genuine love for knowledge, which made him a student all his life. He absorbed the best culture that the best German schools of Pennsylvania could provide. But he did not stop with this. He also made himself master of English. He became a good English scholar, and after awhile his father placed the English department of the publishing work into his hands.

As a youth Sower attended the services of the Brethren church in Germantown. Here at the age of fifteen his tender heart was touched by the finger of God's love and he gave himself to the Master. He was baptized on the 24th of February, 1737. He at

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

once became zealous in the work of the church. In 1747, having now grown to manhood, he was elected to the deacon's office. A year later he was elected to the ministry, and together with Alexander Mack, Jr., was placed in charge of the Germantown congregation. In 1753 he was ordained to the eldership.

Now began a career of renowned service for the church of the German Baptists. In the ministry Sower soon showed himself to be a power. His well-trained mind, his equable disposition and his heart filled with love for all mankind soon left their impress upon those who came to hear him. He was an interesting and forcible speaker, and was possessed of a natural grace and dignity of bearing that made him a conspicuous figure in any assembly. He stood out boldly for the principles of the Dunker faith and wherever he went he made these principles understood and respected.

He was a conspicuous figure in the councils of the church. He often attended the Annual Conferences and took an active interest in shaping the policies of the church. He was repeatedly appointed on important committees to settle difficulties, ordain elders, and the like.

The church at that time pursued a liberal policy and carried on an aggressive work. The missionary spirit was active; new churches were established, and old ones built up. In all this work Elder Sower was a controlling and guiding figure. He was in his day the most prominent and influential member of the church,

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

and his immense popularity was wielded for her honor and support.

On the death of his father in 1758, he succeeded to the ownership and control of all his paternal possessions. At this time the Sower press was the most influential German press in America. The son, however, carried forward and developed and enlarged the splendid plant which his father had so nobly built up. He enlarged the scope of the work along all lines; but especially by greatly increasing the capacity of the paper mills and by adding a type foundry.

We have seen that it was he who issued the second and the third edition of the quarto Bible, continued and improved his father's newspaper and almanac, and founded a magazine. This last, the first of its kind in America, will always stand as a monument to his liberality and generous devotion to the welfare of others. God had blessed him in the world and he felt moved to do something in recognition of divine favor. He chose to do this by printing a religious magazine and distributing it gratuitously to his countrymen. He felt that the highest duty a man owes to his fellows is to set the right before them and urge them to accept it. He hoped his magazine might come into the hands of persons whose attention it would arrest, and turn them to a consideration and acceptance of what is right and true.

He was a hearty advocate of education. He believed that the success of the church depended upon an intelligent membership, just as the success of a state depends upon an intelligent citizenship. When

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

a move was made in 1759 by the Germans of Pennsylvania to provide better facilities for the education of their youth than they had yet enjoyed, Elder Sower took a hearty interest in the matter and helped to carry it to a successful issue. He was one of the solicitors appointed to raise funds to establish the school, and succeeded in raising a sum equivalent to something like three thousand dollars of our currency. Of this sum he himself contributed more than one third.

The enterprise succeeded, and the result was, the Germantown Academy came into being. The school soon took rank as one of the best in the country, and today, after a lapse of one hundred and fifty years, is still in a flourishing condition. Elder Sower served for a number of years on the Board of Trustees for the Academy, and was for some six years president of the Board. Here his sons were educated; and his labors, his prayers and his means bestowed upon the institution, have gone on blessing the lives of others all down through the succeeding generations.

His aggressive views were shared by the church of that time very generally. If they had not been how could Sower have maintained his immense popularity? He was the most influential man in the church in his day, and seems to have enjoyed the complete confidence and esteem, not only of the members of his own church in Germantown, but of the members everywhere. He was the greatest man the church produced in the eighteenth century. He was justly regarded as the fullest representative of her principles and doc-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

trines, which he heralded with pen and voice, and what was still better, lived out in his own life.

During the Revolution, Sower was very outspoken against the war. He believed, in common with the general belief of the church, that all war is wrong, and contrary to the teaching of Christ. Therefore he opposed the war with all of his vast influence. Naturally this brought difficulties upon him.

On the 13th of June, 1777, the Pennsylvania government passed an ordinance requiring all citizens to revoke their allegiance to the King of England and transfer it by oath to the State of Pennsylvania. This Sower could not do because his religion forbade it. Upon him as well as upon all the Dunkers this worked a great hardship. Various expedients were found, however, to evade the ordinance and still remain true to their religion.

One of these was emigration. This statute started a tide of German emigrants towards the Shenandoah Valley, in Virginia. The Myerses, the Wines, the Garbers, the Florys, the Clines, the Wamplers, the Millers, were among the first to come. Some of these first stopped in Maryland for a short time and later followed up the Valley. Most of them settled in what is now the southern end of Shenandoah, Rockingham, and the northern end of Augusta counties. From here they have scattered in all directions, but descendants of these first families are still numerous in the immediate neighborhoods where they first settled, and they are generally among the most enterprising and substantial citizens in their neighborhoods. It is said that

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

there are more Dunkers in Rockingham county, Virginia, than in any other one county in the United States. And the statement seems to be justified by statistics. Dr. J. W. Wayland,<sup>1</sup> who recently collected statistics on this point with great care, puts the number at 2,391, almost half of the five thousand Dunkers in the Shenandoah Valley.

These people left Pennsylvania, not because they were enemies of the Pennsylvania government, nor of any other government (the peace principles of their religion and their quiet, peaceable lives show them to have been the truest supporters of good government), but they left because they could not comply with the provision that required them to take an oath. They taught, "Swear not at all," as their Bibles taught them, and rather than do so they would leave their homes and seek a dwelling-place in a strange land.

Exactly these same conditions confronted Christopher Sower. He was a lover of good government and order, but he would suffer anything rather than forsake his religion. He soon got into the clutches of the minions of the law, and some of the barbarous treatment he endured at their hands I will allow him to tell in his own words. Several years after this, when the war was over, he wrote out the terrible experiences he had suffered, the manuscript of which is still preserved by his descendants. It has been printed several times in German and English.<sup>2</sup>

He writes that on the 24th of May, 1778, he was in

---

<sup>1</sup> In the German Element in the Shenandoah Valley, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> I translate from Seidensticker's Geschichtsblätter, p. 161.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

his house in Germantown at ten o'clock in the evening, "when a body of soldiers from McLean's company," he continues, "surrounded my house and took me out of bed. It was a dark night. They led me through a cornfield, and because I could not travel as fast as they wished, they repeatedly stuck me in the back with their bayonets until we came to Bastian Miller's barn. Here they kept me until the next morning. Now they stripped me naked to the skin, gave me an old shirt and trousers so badly torn that I could scarcely cover my shame, cut off my hair and beard and painted me with red and black oil colors. Thus they led me along barefooted and bareheaded on a warm, sunshiny day, until a friend of mine, seeing me in this condition, asked the soldiers whether they would take the shoes from me if he would give me a pair. The officer promised that they would not. So he took his shoes from his feet and his hat from his head and gave them to me. But after we had gone six miles a soldier came and demanded my shoes, took them off of me and gave me in exchange his old ones, which hurt my feet very much. On the 26th at nine o'clock I arrived at the camp and was brought before the provost."

He was now accused of being an oppressor of the righteous and a spy. At this juncture, however, General Mühlenberg, who had long known and admired him, sent him word to appeal to General Washington. He did so and promptly received a discharge.

Two months after this he was arrested a second time, because he had not complied with a proclamation

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

of which he had never heard. All of his property was taken except the clothes upon his back and his spectacles. He asked permission to keep some medicines that he himself had prepared, but was refused.

His vast possessions were taken possession of by the Government. His personal property, consisting of his printing establishment and supplies of merchandise, books, furniture, paper, etc., were sold. His real estate, comprising houses, farms, paper mills, type foundry and the like were also confiscated and sold, although there was a law forbidding the sale of confiscated real estate until the youngest son had arrived at the age of twenty-one.

It is evident that this outrageous treatment was perpetrated by his enemies very much more in order to get possession of his wealth than to vindicate the law, which was violated at almost every stage of the nefarious transaction. The general government had no hand in this wicked persecution: it was conducted by the small military power of the neighborhood who saw in Sower a rich object of plunder. Had he sought to do so, he might have recovered his property after the war, but, true to his religion, "when reviled, he reviled not again." "Strange that it should befall him, the sage, the philosopher, and above all the defender of the supremacy of love and sympathy for all men, to endure the whole weight of a wicked, malevolent persecution, as though he were a convict proven guilty of crime."

Thus almost in a day Sower was reduced from affluence to abject poverty. His friends contrib-

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

uted to his support, and he lived on without bitterness, without complaint, still trusting in the Lord, who doeth all things well.

He continued to serve the church in various capacities. His sermons were always appreciated and listened to with marked attention. As a pastor he was remarkably successful. His large-hearted nature enabled him to enter sympathetically into all conditions of life.

He was appointed by the Annual Conference of 1780 to visit the various churches of Pennsylvania. This general visit seems to have been intended to strengthen the churches, hold elections for ministers and deacons, and ordain elders. He also attended several communion services and preached a number of times. The fact that he was selected by the Conference for this important work shows that he was still the able leader, the wise counselor, that he had been for so many years before.

It is said that two weeks before his death he walked to Skippack, a distance of twelve miles, to preach at the Dunker meeting, and after the service returned in the same apostolic manner to his home.

He died August 26, 1784, surrounded by members of his family. Elder Martin Urner conducted the funeral services, and paid a glowing tribute to his memory.

Thus passed away one of the greatest men ever identified with the church of the German Baptist Brethren.

A few selections from his numerous works must

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

suffice to close this sketch. The following story from the Almanac for 1773 is characteristic, and will give some idea of his fluent, graphic style.

### *A True and Remarkable Story.<sup>1</sup>*

Of all the many vices that degrade human nature, none is so detestable as ingratitude. The ancient philosophers regarded this as the very essence of wickedness. The man who showed himself unthankful for a neighborly kindness they looked upon as a monster. The rational creature that can forget its benefactor, they looked upon as a contemptible reproach. However despicable ingratitude may be, there is after all no vice more common than this. Whoever thinks back will be able to see that those to whom he has shown the most favors have often returned him evil for good, dissimulation for frankness, and hatred for love.

I have always looked upon gratitude as the soul of virtue. And the man who is warmed with it, let him be of whatever station in life he may, is an honor to human nature and an honor to blessed immortality.

In Appian and other authors we read of the gratitude of lions and other animals toward their benefactors; and every story of this kind fills my heart with love and veneration for these noble children of eternal wisdom. But the recollection of the following story—the humble, sensible expression of thankfulness—fills my soul with great admiration.

In the reign of Queen Anne there was no courtier to whom so much honor and respect were shown, or who was elevated to higher offices and responsibilities, than the noble Butler, the Duke of Ormond. Her Majesty even appointed him finally to the vicegerency

---

<sup>1</sup> From copy in library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

of Ireland. As his Grace was passing over from Chester to Dublin through the dangerous channel, he was struck by a terrible storm, which drove them upon the rocks at Anglesia. His Grace and only a few of his company saved their lives with the greatest difficulty by swimming. The part of the island where they reached shore was cold, unfruitful and uninhabited. When they had traveled several miles through a waste region, the first house to which they came was the little hut of a poor preacher. It consisted of a kitchen and a sleeping room, both of which were poorly furnished. The minister, when he saw his wet, cold guests and knew that they were people of high rank, received them very kindly, had a great fire built to dry their wet clothes, and set before them the best provisions that he had in the house. His frugal and yet becoming entertainment pleased the Duke very much. He was greatly surprised when he perceived in his host so much solid contentment and unfeigned happiness. He asked the clergyman how high his yearly income ran. "Five pounds," answered Joseph (for this was the minister's name), "but I have an industrious wife, and we have two cows and sell their milk and butter, which almost keeps us. So we save the five pounds to buy our clothes with and to help in bringing up our children." When Ormond took his departure he promised that he would remember his host, and his secretary gave Joseph an address where he could find his guests if he should ever come to Dublin.

The minister waited a long time to see whether any account was going to be taken of his kindness, but in vain. Finally, being encouraged by his wife, he decided to seek his fortune, and journeyed to the capital of Ireland. When he reached this place he sought out the bishop to get permission to preach the next Sunday morning in the cathedral, where the viceroy and

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the members of parliament were accustomed to attend. As he was a scholarly and eloquent man, his request was gladly granted. When he had gone up into the chancel, he chose the following very appropriate text from the first book of Moses, 40: 23, "But the chief cupbearer thought not of Joseph, but forgot him." (In the English language a cupbearer is called a Butler, and this was the name also of the viceroy.)

The minister now portrayed the vice of ingratitude in the blackest colors, and showed what kind of an influence the mode of life among the people of high stations in the world had upon their dispositions; namely that it puts them in a condition that they forget all the human kindnesses which have been shown them by those who dwell in the deep valley of contempt. When he had finished with this criminal forgetfulness against their benefactors, he observed that such things scarcely ever come about from evil intentions, but usually from those numerous affairs of state with which people in official positions are laudably encumbered. He insisted, however, that their hearts are poisoned by the bewitching flattery of the insinuating parasites of the court, who are always trying to divert the heart of their master from the laudable exercise of benevolence, justice and mercy, and to turn it to cruelty, dissipation and debauchery. And when he at length came to the application, he made use of the following imagery as a conclusion.

"And now, my respected hearers, let each one of us turn our thoughts inward and ask ourselves the question, 'Have I not at some time received a kindness from some one in a station of life far inferior to my own, to whom bountiful heaven had not given so many temporal gifts as to me, but to whom it had given more important blessings, namely, an open and generous heart? And have I forgotten this generosity? Have I also neglected to reward it tenfold? Have I not at

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

some time in my life been placed face to face with the merciless elements of this world, when it seemed as if they had all combined to bring about my destruction? Have I ever seen my comrades swallowed up in the depths of the sea, while I and a very few others came safe to land? And has it ever happened that a poor but contented man took me and my unfortunate comrades, on such an occasion, into his house, where his cheerful wife quickly kindled a fire and, with undissembled simplicity, prepared a meal of common but wholesome food to refresh our weakening and exhausted spirits, and to quicken our feeble limbs, stiff with cold, which were now again safe from the dangers of a stormy sea?"

Ormond was very attentive to the sermon, and when he searched his heart, he found himself guilty of criminal neglect on several points that were very similar to the ones set forth in the representation. The conviction that this was so became still stronger when he recollected the figure before him and the circumstances that had been rehearsed, and was convinced that this was his charitable and generous host of Anglesia, whom he had uncharitably forgotten. He turned to his secretary and said, "Is not this our genuine Joseph?" "May it please your Excellency, I believe it is he," was the reply. "Invite him to take dinner with me," returned the vicegerent.

When Joseph came into the presence of the Duke, he told him with seemly modesty, which is becoming to a noble spirit, that he was the poor preacher of Anglesia whose welcome guest the Duke had once been, that this seemed to be the one opportunity of his life to advance his fortune, and that he had come to remind His Excellency of his promise to provide for him. "You are a worthy, honorable man," said the Duke, and ordered at once that search should be made for an unoccupied pastorate. Only one was found

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

empty, this one with a yearly income of three hundred pounds sterling. Then said the Duke, "No one is so worthy of it as our beneficent host," and he advanced him at once from five pounds to three hundred pounds a year.

But alas, of how short duration is all human prosperity! How quickly does all temporal fortune pass away! How little dependence can be put in princes and the children of men! When George the First ascended the throne Ormond was deprived of all his offices and had to flee for his life, and all of his possessions reverted to the crown. For a time he was supported by the bounty of his friends, but this after a time ceased; and he, who at one time had had everything at his command and had directed everything as generalissimo of England, was reduced to a forlorn fugitive, and subjected to the most terrible fears, want, oppression, poverty and contempt. But how his heart rejoiced when he learned that aid came to him from an unexpected source, namely, from his one-time host and benefactor, Joseph. This grateful man, when he heard how wretched the Duke had become, felt himself obliged to relieve the want of his great and good patron out of his own income, for it was to him that he owed all of his present prosperity. He then turned to his dear wife and said: "My Beloved, have you heard of the great poverty and deep misery of our worthy benefactor, who has raised us to our present state of prosperity? You know that we can live as well on a hundred pounds a year as on a thousand, how would it be for us to give him two hundred pounds a year as long as he lives? For I hear that all his friends have forgotten him and that there is danger of his starving from hunger and want." Joseph's wife agreed with him at once, and immediately one year's salary was sent to the Duke. The Duke was very much moved by this second act of kindness and

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

wrote a circumstantial account of the transactions between himself and Joseph, to a nobleman at court who had still remained his true friend. Because of this assistance rendered, Joseph was afterwards elevated to another living that brought in a yearly revenue of five hundred pounds. But before he could enter upon his new charge the brave Duke died in his exiled state and the generous-hearted Joseph could no longer provide for him. He had gone into the eternal kingdom, where the oppressor and the oppressed meet each other; and his soul had spread its wings in the region where riches and wealth are looked upon as contemptible trifles, where titles and dignities are trampled under foot with contempt and where virtue is exalted and honored.

Because of the fame of the *Kräuterbuch*, or series of articles on botany, that ran in the Almanac for eighteen years and won universal favor, I feel that a specimen from its pages is due the reader. I have selected his treatment of one of the commonest of all herbs, coffee.

### *Coffee. Engl. Coffee. Lat. Coffeae.*

If coffee in its raw state is boiled in water, it will impart to the water an unpleasant taste. But if the grains are first roasted, then pulverized, and this powder boiled in water, it will give off an oily, alkaline fume which infuses a pleasant odor to the water. This liquid will then possess the virtues and peculiar properties of the plant, and, if drunk in moderation, will serve to arouse and invigorate the animal spirits; will relieve costiveness, scatter the humors, increase the circulation of the blood, free the chest from phlegm, open the ureters, and in short make the whole body nimble and the mind active.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

Coffee may be drunk at any time of the day. Whoever has a weak stomach, however, will find that it will agree with him best at or immediately after, meal-time, as it aids digestion and prevents flatulency and belching. Those who use it as a preventive of chlorosis and dropsy, also as a protection against cough and asthma, had better use it sparingly in the morning, but can drink it freely before or immediately after eating.

This drink, whether many persons regard it or not, has many other excellent effects in various conditions and weaknesses of human life. First those who are annoyed with accumulations of mucous in the head, with weak memory, headache, giddiness, drowsiness, all such would experience good results from coffee if they would take a drink every morning an hour before breakfast, or immediately after the morning and evening meal; provided only that they continue to do so for a considerable length of time.

This drink is also good for drunkenness, which will be cured by it if it is not already too far gone. For this purpose the coffee must be made weak, however, otherwise it will warm the blood too much. Because strong coffee does this, public coffee-houses were prohibited in England for a long time. It was seen that those who came together to enjoy this temperance drink contrived and perpetrated much secret mischief. At the same time, however, every one was permitted to frequent the wine cellars.

Scholars and students who have to read, write or study at night, may drink this liquid with excellent results immediately after the evening meal, or instead of it, and thereby prevent sleepiness. By it the mind is quickened and the digestion of the stomach is well performed.

If the eyes are held over a cup of hot coffee and the vapor is allowed to bathe them, they will become clear

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

and bright. It will drive away inflammation, pain, or tumors, and will prevent those sties that sometimes appear between the hairs of the eyelids.

Hoarseness, coughs and asthma, which are caused by cold drinks and dampness, can be prevented by the use of coffee, which may be enjoyed after the meals.

Those who are disposed to lung trouble, or are already affected by it, can use coffee-milk with profit, which may be prepared in the following manner: Take fresh cow's milk, boil it, put a quarter or three-eighths of an ounce of ground coffee into it, and sweeten to taste; allow it to boil a little longer, then draw it off and it is ready for use. Give it to the sick to drink mornings and evenings, and let it be good and warm, unless he has high fever. By the use of this coffee-milk not only many who were already afflicted with consumption have been cured, but also others have been cured of gout or like disease, or at least were greatly relieved, after they had been afflicted for a long time.

The drinking of coffee serves those well who are afflicted with palpitation of the heart and are in danger of dropsy of the heart, because it opens the veins and arteries of the breast and drives off the phlegm through the renal ducts. Besides it is very healthful to the stomach if taken immediately after meals, or drunk sparingly at other times. It aids digestion, and so helps to prevent heaviness, sour stomach, heart-burn, gripe and the like. On the other hand it sweetens and changes the gastric properties, stimulates the appetite, strengthens the nerves, checks the rising phlegm, and prevents bloating.

If made weak it has excellent power to quench thirst, and to cool the heated, raging blood.

In cases of protracted illness that was brought on by a poor stomach, this wholesome drink will soon bring the sick to their feet again. Also those who find

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

themselves inclined to dropsy can keep themselves free from it by using coffee, provided they drink it strong.

Spare persons, who have a choleric, melancholic temperament, and likewise hot, raging blood and a fiery, restless, wakeful spirit, must avoid this drink. They might easily bring their blood to the point of ebullition, and could even drive out the spirit of sanity, so that the whole body might fall into a state of folly and imbecility. If, however, the leanness (*Magrigkeit*) is not caused by sharp, heated blood, but by a weak stomach, coffee may be drunk with good results.

Christopher sometimes wrote poetry also, and in this form of composition was scarcely less skilled than in prose. Four years after his death Peter Leibert issued a booklet of verse containing poems by Christopher Sower, Alexander Mack and others. It was entitled *Etliche Liebliche und erbauliche Lieder, &c.*, a copy of which is in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. From this copy I have made the following imperfect translation of a poem by Sower, preserving the original form.

1. Christians here themselves must plant  
    In the cross's narrow way;  
They must suffer, toil, lament,  
    Rising to the heavenly day;  
Who with Jesus hopes to be  
    Must gain him through the bloody tree;  
Those who win the laurels there  
    Here a crown of thorns must wear.
2. Here with tears they reap and sow  
    And of sorrows have their share,  
Who before God's throne will go  
    And the radiant garment wear

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Receive the crown of pearls, and see  
Themselves triumphed victoriously.

Those whom here affliction tries  
Can dwell with God above the skies.

3. Weeping, sighing, sobbing, praying,  
Smooths for us the way to God,  
Entreating Him in each gainsaying  
Comforts us in every need;  
Ne'er doth comfort him despise  
Who in hope on God relies;  
Who in faith to Him doth look,  
Truly builds upon the rock.
4. Ever roamed I here and there,  
Of experience deep in need;  
Now I trust the shepherd-care  
Of my Guide, his mercy plead;  
His compassion guideth me  
Neath the cross so wondrously  
That on Him I can rely  
When distress is raging high.
5. Love like this is past all measure  
Which to me He has revealed;  
O my soul, fail not to treasure  
What to thee He has unsealed;  
Thou to Him dost patience owe  
In His footsteps still to go,  
And in love to please Him well,  
All through life His praises tell.
6. To be true, I vowed sincerely  
Yet my vow have kept but ill,  
Thou hast waited daily, yearly,  
With all clemency, until  
I have grown disconsolate,  
And of my self-will satiate.  
Now to Thee my heart I give  
To follow in Thy ways and live.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

7. Selfishness, thou fiend forbid,  
Mak'st for me so much annoy;  
Were I only from thee rid,  
I might always feel the joy  
Of the powerful love of Jesus,  
Which His spirit's impulse gives us:  
We His heavenly love to see,  
He to praise Himself in me.
8. Prove me, Lord, Thyself convince  
Of my status day by day,  
Incline my heart to innocence,  
Help me Thy precepts to obey.  
Oh, let sorrows twining me  
Bind me closer unto Thee,  
So that I from that great day  
May wear the victor's crown alway.
9. Today is given us yet to strive  
And to contend with knightly skill;  
Tomorrow we'll divide the prize,  
Seeking our mission to fulfill.  
Whate'er is true we undertake,  
But we completely abrogate  
That which is known as worldly lust  
That leads us God's love to distrust.
10. Sixty years have now passed by  
Of my life's infirmities;  
Like an arrow shot on high,  
So depart life's vanities;  
Yet these often us detain,  
And our rashness thus restrain;  
Afterwards too late 'tis grieved  
That we by them have been deceived.
11. Oh, how grief my heart doth harrow,  
How I wail the loss and waste,  
When I see what worldly sorrow  
Often fills my aching breast,

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

And so sore deludes my heart  
That all love doth therefrom depart;  
Also the work I should perform  
Doth oftentimes remain undone.

12. Under many storms perplexing,  
In temptations oft renewed,  
God still gave me His protection  
And has always by me stood.  
Oh, His love is boundless, free,  
Lord, my Savior, bless Thou me.  
Except for Him I must have failed  
In the trials which me assailed.
13. Glory to my soul, and praise!  
Hail to God, His patience see,  
Which in many wondrous ways  
Has shown to me His clemency,  
Let His goodness lead me on,  
Trusting in His love divine;  
Let His grace not from me wend  
Until I reach my destined end.

*Peter Leibert.*

Peter Leibert has already been mentioned as the man who bought most of the Sower printing equipment when it was confiscated and sold in 1778. After the treaty of peace, he in connection with his son-in-law, Michael Billmeyer, opened a new printing office in Germantown in 1784, as we have seen.

Since this establishment was equipped almost exclusively from the Sower plant, and was conducted on the same lines as the former business, it may be regarded as a continuation of the Sower press.

Peter Leibert was born in 1727, and was brought up

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

in the Sower printing office. He entered as an apprentice in early life, and at its dissolution he was one of its most useful and most trusted employees.

He was on intimate terms with the great leaders in the Germantown church, Christopher Sower and Alexander Mack. His wife was Mary Nice, a sister of the wife of Alexander Mack.

He was a minister in the Brethren church and did some acceptable preaching. He was a man of influence and was highly respected in the community where he lived.

As editor and publisher he wrote considerably. For several years he conducted the resuscitated Sower newspaper and almanac, and a comparison of these with the earlier issues shows that he kept up both to a good standard.

In 1787 Leibert and Billmeyer dissolved partnership, and the next year Leibert began a general publishing business on his own account. In 1791 he associated his son in the business with him. But after this year the father's name alone appears in the imprints.

To Peter Leibert belongs the honor of having printed the first Dunker hymn-book. It was issued in 1791, and was printed in English. It was entitled, "*The Christian's Duty*," etc. It contained three hundred and twenty duodecimo pages. The hymns were collected from various sources and authors.

Leibert continued the printing business until 1797. In 1796 he brought out an edition of Bunyan's famous work under the title, *Eines Christen Reise Nach der*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Seligen Ewigkeit, welche unterschiedlichen artigen Sinnbildernden gansen Zustand einer bussfertigen und Gottsuchenden Seele vorstellt*, etc. This work is one of the very last to be issued from a Dunker press in the 18th century.

Except for a short interruption during the Revolution the Dunkers had been the leading German publishers in this country for nearly sixty years. After this their publishing interests, as also their literary activity, were rather sporadic until the latter half of the 19th century.

A few paragraphs from this last named work,<sup>1</sup> telling of Bunyan's conversion and power as a preacher, may not be unwelcome.

We have found, after diligent searching among biographical records, that without doubt in the second year of Bunyan's married life a visible change had taken place in him. The pleasures of youth were, however, deeply rooted. Dancing was very difficult for him to give up; and when he abandoned it he found great amusement in ringing bells. This he carried on as long as he could, disregarding the inner lashings of conscience, until he began to fear that the bell might fall down upon his head, or even the whole tower might come down and crush him.

An association of people, who called themselves the Ranters, arose in England about the time that Bunyan's conversion began to be noticeable. They claimed that they were perfect, and had no more need of law but could now do whatever they wished. And they roamed about very confidently in pursuit of their im-

---

<sup>1</sup> From a biographical sketch appended to the volume. Copy in the library of Bridgewater College.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

pure desires and lusts. Through their dissolute influence one of Bunyan's friends became a downright atheist. As there seemed to be some distinguished authors among these people, this very man brought it about that Bunyan formed the habit of reading the Bible. He brought the Scriptures to him, and the result was that Bunyan ventured to read some of the passages. Since he was not able to judge such writings thoroughly, he turned to God in prayer and prayed in the following words:

"O Lord, I am a foolish man, and am not able to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Lord, do not abandon me to my own blindness. Help me to accept this teaching or to cast it away. If it is of God, do not permit me to despise it; if it is of the devil, guard me that I do not accept it. Lord, I lay my soul in regard to this matter wholly at thy feet, and I humbly beseech thee, do not allow me to be led astray."

This prayer was graciously heard, and grace awaked in him a great disgust for this impious doctrine, and brought about a complete separation from all such companionships. The Bible, however, now became much more precious to him, and it was as if he were learning for the first time to read with his own eyes.

In the year 1655 he was baptized, and was received as a member into the church at Bedford. This was in his 26th year, and his faith became all the while stronger and better known. After he had lived happily in the church for five or six years, and had been tried by many and severe temptations, he was finally, with fasting and praying and laying on of hands, ordained to preach the Gospel. He was now 32 years old.

His preaching had indeed a small beginning, but divine favor did not leave itself unwitnessed, and the concourse of people soon became large. This soon

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

created a sensation, aroused envy and ill-will, but secured him many followers. Once when a young student from the university of Cambridge was riding past a meetinghouse and met a great concourse of people, he asked what it meant, and was told that John Bunyan was going to preach there. He dismounted and gave a boy some money to take care of his horse and said, "I will hear too what the tinker has to talk about." He then went in and heard the sermon, and was so much pleased that after this he would hear scarcely any one except the tinker. This student, who was not of the best sort, was seized by the spirit of grace and very much changed, so that he also afterwards became a celebrated preacher.

At this time the church was at peace. Its meetings were blessed and the membership increased very much. It was in the first part of the reign of Charles II, when liberty of conscience was publicly proclaimed.

Those who feared God now made use of the time, for they with David could say, "Great are the works of the Lord, and whoever regards them, shall have nothing but joy therein." Bunyan's conversion was also a special work of the Lord. The children of God rejoiced in him, who had been sent to them, as it were, from the dead. Many came from a distance to see and hear him. Many were, indeed, like the Athenians, moved by nothing else than to say or to hear something new. But because the Lord himself acknowledged the work of the office which He had placed upon his servant, wonderful things often took place, for the spirit of God had free course in the life of Bunyan. For this reason he often had to speak words that had not been previously meditated or thought upon. And these produced a greater effect than all others, as he himself felt and willingly showed, so that God alone should be given all the honor.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

### *Other Writers.*

In this presentation of eighteenth century writers of the church it is not my purpose to be critically exhaustive. There are, however, several other names that must be mentioned, although briefly.

One of these is George Adam Martin. In some respects Martin was a unique figure. Like many of his contemporaries, he was violently shaken and tempest-tossed by the conflicting religious views with which he found himself surrounded. He was of a restless disposition and was never long satisfied with anything.

He was a native of Germany and came to this country as a mere boy. He possessed an unusually brilliant intellect and a pious heart. At an early age he professed religion and became a member of the Reformed church. Later he heard the Brethren preach and at the age of twenty-one was received into the Brethren church by baptism. This was in 1737. He was soon after advanced to the ministry, and in 1739 was ordained to the eldership.

He became a strong preacher and a restless worker in the cause of Christ. Not infrequently, however, he found himself at variance with his brethren and with the established usages of the church. He opposed close communion, and in other things refused to submit fully to the recognized practices of the denomination. Heated controversies sometimes took place at the Annual Conferences which he attended, in regard to methods of church work and church polity.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Finally he found himself so much out of harmony with the Brethren that he broke with them, accepted the Sabbatarian views, and became a follower of Beissel. This occurred in 1762. In his new church home he was as little contented, however, as he had been before. Yet he spent the remainder of his life in fellowship with the Ephrata hermits.

He was a fluent speaker and a ready writer. Besides some biographical matter, which may be worth editing, he wrote the *Christliche Bibliothek*, a book of distinct literary merit.

Of a very different disposition was Jacob Donner. He was a stern, strong advocate of the principles of the church, and something of a missionary. About the middle of the eighteenth century he moved west of the Susquehanna, into what is now York county, Pennsylvania. Here he began to preach and in 1758, he organized his converts into a church. He was an ordained elder, and presided over this congregation for some time.

Later he acquired a handsome estate on the banks of the Monocacy creek in what is now Frederick county, Maryland. Here he lived pleasantly and gave much of his time to the work of the church. He traveled extensively in the manner of his day, everywhere preaching the Word of God with power.

He was a man richly endowed by nature. He had something of the typical pioneer about him. God prospered him in the good things of this world; and besides preaching with great ability, he was also something of a poet. He wrote hymns and probably

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

other poetry. He lived to be an old man, and was one of the pillars of the church in his day.

There were many other great men in the ranks of the Dunkers during the period we are treating, but they have no claim upon this history, because they are not identified with authorship. They did a noble work in other fields. Many of them preached with great power and gave their labors freely for the cause they loved. Their lives are unwritten, their works are unrecorded, it may be, but the results of their labors still live. Of this class were such men as George Klein, Daniel Letterman, Michael Pfautz, the two Martin Urners, the Prices, and others.

I shall mention but one other name, that of Christopher Sower the third. He was the oldest son of the second Christopher, the influential elder of the Brethren church. Reference has already been made to him in connection with the Sower press. He was born in 1754, became a member of the Dunker church at the age of sixteen, married at the age of twenty-one, was associated with his father in the printing business about the same time, and in connection with his brother Peter began a printing business on his own behalf at the age of twenty-two.

During the Revolution he took sides with the English, as we have seen, and during the winter of 1777-78 issued a paper in Philadelphia in support of the royal cause. This was the *Pennsylvanische Staats Courier*. It ran some seven or eight months.

He left Philadelphia with the British army in the summer of 1778. The next year he went to St. John's,

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

New Brunswick, where he founded and edited the *Royal Gazette*. Later he lived in England for several years, and was made the King's printer. About 1785 he moved to Nova Scotia where he had been appointed Assistant Postmaster General. He later moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where he died in 1799, at the age of forty-five.

Sower had been married at the beginning of the Revolution to a Miss Knorr. He left a family of children, the oldest son of whom was called after the family name, Christopher, making the fourth of this name in the direct line of descent.

Christopher Sower had been well educated, and was a writer of considerable power. In the course of his varied editorial labors he had occasion to write a good deal. Had his efforts been better directed he might have accomplished more than he did.

The literary record of the Brethren during the eighteenth century is one in every way worthy of them, and is an honor to the church. Their work deserves to be better known among us, and to this end, it needs to be put in a form that we, as a church, and the world at large, can the better understand and appreciate it. To contribute something to this end is the chief purpose of the present work.



## APPENDIX.

To complete our impression of the work under consideration with a comprehensive view, I have thought it well to collect in a compendious form all the work produced, either written or printed, by the German Baptists in the eighteenth century.

### A.—WORK PRODUCED IN EUROPE.

1713.

*Kurtze und einfältige Vorstellung der äussern, aber doch heiligen Rechten und Ordnungen des Hauses Gottes, vorgestellt in einem Gespräch unter Vater und Sohn.* Von Alexander Mack.

Printed at Schwarzenau, Germany.

*Grundforschende Fragen, welche denen neuen Täufern in Wittgensteinischen, insonderheit zu beantworten vorgelegt waren, sammt beygefügten kurzen und einfältigen Antworten auf dieselben, vormals schriftlich herausgegeben von einem Aufrichtigen Mitglied der Gemeine zu Wittgenstein.*

This is the title under which this work was reproduced later in this country. The original title, if different from this, has not been preserved. The writer of the answers to these questions (*Aufrichtigen Mitglied*) was of course Alezander Mack. Printed at the same time and place with the above.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1726

### *Die Heilige Bibel.*

This was the famous edition of the Holy Writ issued by the Separatists at Berleberg, in Germany, and therefore known as the Berleberg Bible. Alexander Mack and others of the early Brethren were interested in the enterprise and contributed liberally to it. This is the reason for including it here.

### B.—ISSUES OF THE SOWER PRESS, WITH NOTES.

In former chapters I have treated those works of the Sower press that are best known, the Bibles and the periodicals, including the almanacs. There are, however, a great many other things in the history of this great establishment that are fully as interesting and as important, in their way, as those we have considered. I shall, therefore, bring together all the issues of the press so far as discovered up to this time, under the years in which they appeared, and note any interesting facts in connection with them that may have come under my notice. I shall not generally reproduce the full titles, many of which are very long, as several instances already cited will show. In using abbreviated forms, however, I trust I shall be sufficiently clear at all times, so that the works can be identified without the possibility of error.

1738.

*Eine Ernstliche Ermahnung an Junge und Alte.  
Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

These two publications have been considered at length in a previous chapter.

*Frühling ist herbei gekommen.*

*Mein Heiland der du bist mir.*

These are the beginning lines of two popular German songs. The fact that Sower had published these songs was forgotten and was not rediscovered until the summer of 1904, when the Rev. A. Stapleton of Wrightsville, Pa., found copies of them in a heap of rubbish in one of the out-of-the-way places of his native state.

1739

*Zionitischer Weyrauchs-Hügel.*

*Ein abgenöthigter Bericht.*

This is the little book that Christopher Sower printed by way of setting himself right before the public for his part in the dispute with Conrad Beissel while he was printing the *Weyrauchs-Hügel*. I have quoted, in the last chapter, one of the letters from it.

*Ein A B C und Buchstabierbuch.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

This second issue of the almanac contains the announcement of Sower's paper, *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, the first number of which was distributed with the almanac.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

This first issue bears date of August 20. After this so long as the paper remained a monthly, it was issued on the 16th of each month.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1740

*Die Gefahr bey unbekehrten Predigern, vorgestellt  
in einer Sermon über Marcus am VI. v. 34. Bey Gil-  
bert Tennent.*

*Gewissenhafte Vorstellung vom Mangel rechter  
Kinder-Zucht,*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

There were two editions of the almanac for this year. Some were printed in two colors, black and red; others are in black only.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-  
Schreiber.*

*Georg Weitfields Predigten.*

This was a translation from an English edition of Whitfield's sermons which Franklin had published earlier in the same year.

Extracts from the *Laws of William Penn.*

This is the first English work issued from the Sower press, of which I have found trace. The printer does not seem to have succeeded as well in English as in German, and there is no evidence that the experiment was repeated for nearly ten years.

1741

*Bekanntmachung.*

This was Sower's prospectus of his quarto Bible, which appeared two years later. It is put here on the authority of Dr. Seidensticker. Stapleton would assign it to the preceding year. It is undated.

*Einfältige Warnungs-und Wächter-Stimme an die*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*gerufene Seelen dieser Zeit. Von Johann Adam Gruber.*

*Die Gründe und Ursachen der Christlichen Wiedergeburth, Oder die Neue Geburth durch Christum.*

*Eine Betrachtung des Lasters der Trunkenheit.*

This Consideration of the Crime of Drunkenness and well meant Warning against Immoderate Drinking is one of the first publications to appear in this country against the use of intoxicants. When it is recalled that this was half a century before there was any real organized effort against intemperance, the fact of this publication becomes significant. In 1741 drunkenness was very common in the colonies, and unfortunately the vice was not frowned upon with the disfavor with which we regard it today. It was no discredit for a man to get drunk after dinner, nor was it looked upon as very bad for a clergyman to own a stillhouse and himself indulge to excess. The Dunker church has always stood flat-footed against every form of intemperance. Sower wrote and spoke against it repeatedly. The issue of this book seems to mark the beginning of his crusade against the evil. It is a small volume of only fifty-five pages.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschichtschreiber.*

1742

*Ausbund. Das ist: Etliche schöne Christliche Lieder Wie sie in dem Gefängnüs zu Bassau in dem Schloss von den Schweitzer-Brüdern und von anderen rechtgläubigen Christen hin und her gedichtet worden.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

This was a large song book especially popular among the Mennonites. It was first printed in Europe as early as 1583, and was extensively used for two hundred and fifty or three hundred years. The Sowers printed two editions of it after this one, in 1751 and 1767, and their successors, Leibert and Billmeyer, another in 1785. Many of the songs give biographical details of martyred Christians.

*Bekanntmachung.* By Henry Antes.

*Ein Zeugniss eines Betrüben.* By J. A. Gruber.

*Hirten-Lieder von Bethlehem.*

A hymn book of 138 duodecimo pages, containing 369 hymns. It was printed by Sower for Count Zinzendorf soon after his arrival in this country.

*Das Kleine A B C in der Schule Christi.*

*Vorschlag zur Errichtung einer Deutschen Schule.*

*Wahrer Bericht.*

*Zeugniss der Brüderschaft in Zion.*

*Eine Schrift-Gemassen Zeugnissz.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

1743.

*Biblia, Das ist: Die Heilige Schrift Altes und Neues Testaments.*

This was the famous first edition of the Sower Bible of which I have given a detailed account in a previous chapter.

*Eines Geringen Bericht.* By John Adam Gruber.

*Samuel Güldins Gewesenen Predigers in den Drey Haupt-Kirchen zu Bern in der Schweitz.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Wohlgegründetes Bedenken der Christlichen Gemeine in und bey Ephrata Von dem Weg des Heiligung.* By John Hildebrand.

*Mistisches und Kirchliches Zeugnüss der Brüderschaft in Zion.* By John Hildebrand.

*Schrifftmäziges Zeugnüss von dem Himmlichen und Jungfräulichen Gebährungs-Werk.* By John Hildebrand.

All three of these works were part of the warfare against Zinzendorf, as we have seen.

*Glaubens-Bekenntniss.* By Ernest Christopher Hochmann of Hohenau.

This will be recognized as Hochmann's Confession of Faith, quoted in the first chapter of this work. Printed first in Germany in 1702, it now appeared for the first time in America. It was much read by the early Dunkers, and it has been conjectured that they may have thought at times of publishing it as their creed. Mr. J. F. Sachse has published in his *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania* a curious English translation of it, a very free rendering, which he supposes may have been prepared for this purpose. In fact it has been called the Dunker creed, but this is clearly an error, as it was never published or accepted by the denomination as such. The only creed the Dunkers ever adopted is the New Testament.

*Jacob Lischys Reformirten Predigers Declaration seines Sinnes.*

*Der Neue Charter.*

A translation from the English original of the char-

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

ter of Pennsylvania, and given away to all the subscribers of Sower's paper.

*Der Balsam von Giliad.*

*Ein Kurtzer Bericht von den Ursachen, warum die Gemeinschaft in Ephrata sich mit dem. Grafen Zinzendorf und seine Leuten eingelassen.*

*Ein Schreiben der herrnhutischen Gemeine aus ihrer Conferenz an Meister Johann Hildebrand in Ephrata.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

1744.

*Anhang oder Appendix zu dem Charter von Verordnungen.*

*Hans Engelbrechts Göttliche Offenbahrungen sammt einer Erzählung seines wunderbahren Lebens.*

*Ein Spiegel der Tauffe mit Geist, mit Wasser, und mit Blut.* By Henry Funk.

*Der kleine Catechismus D. Martin Luthers.*

This edition was edited and annotated by Count Zinzendorf and the preface was also supplied by him.

*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel der Kinder Zions.*

This is the hymn book generally used by the Dunkers until they issued one for themselves in 1791.

*Der Frommen Lotterie, oder Geistliches Schatzkästlein.* By Gerhard Tersteegen.

"A collection of 381 tickets on which pious lines of Tersteegen and Scripture passages were printed, enclosed in a neat leather case or wooden box. Good

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

pious souls would find enjoyment and edification in drawing these cards, thus turning even play into a means of spiritual comfort."<sup>1</sup>

The set in the Bridgewater College library are in a strong case and well preserved. Each card has two quotations, a passage of Scripture at the top and four lines of verse from Tersteegen on the lower half of the face. To show what they are like, I take at random number 101, which may be rendered as follows:

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye (according to the flesh) would.—Gal. 5: 17.

Not to Yield.

To feel sin and still avoid it,  
Is the way to happiness;  
To do wrong and suffer wrong,  
Makes the greatest difference.

*Tractätgen von der Geringschätzung und Nichtigkeit unseres natürlichen und zeitlichen Lebens.*

*Verschiedene alte und neuere Geschichten von Erscheinungen der Geister.*

These ghost stories were popular, as is shown by the fact that editions were called for in 1744, 1748, 1755, 1792.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Seidensticker.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1745.

*Eine Beschreibung der wahren Kirche, was und wo sie sey.*

*Freymüthige und unpartheyische Gedanken von der Religion.*

*Das Neue Testament unseres Herren und Heylande Jesu Christi.*

This was the first edition of the Sower Testaments. It was a 12mo. of 592 pages, with rubricated title.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber.*

1746.

*Die merkwürdige Geschichte oder Bekehrung von Jacob Friedrich Duss, ein Bäcker in Würtemberg.*

*Kurzer Auszug, 231, Unterricht von der Einsammlung.*

*Der Psalter des Königs und Propheten Davids.*

*Die umgewendete Bibel.*

*Unterricht von der Einsammlung des Willens der Seelen.*

*Vom Cometen.*

*Leichenpredigt.* By J. J. Zubly.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Berichte.*

The change from “*Geschicht-Schreiber*” to “*Berichte*” in the name of the paper was made in October of the previous year.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

1747.

*Ein Geringer Schein des Verachteten Lichtleins der Wahrheit, die in Christo ist.*

*Eine ruffende Wächterstimme an alle Seelen die nach Gott und seinem Reich hungernd sind.* By John Hildebrand.

*Ein Ernstlicher Ruff in Christlicher Liebe an alles Volk.* By Benjamin Holme.

*Klare und Gewisse Wahrheit.*

*Noch mehr Zeugnisse der Wahrheit.*

These last two are tracts advocating the principles of peace on religious grounds. Christopher Sower was opposed to war and strife of every kind.

*Geistliches Blumen-Gärtlein Inniger Seelen.* By Tersteegen.

This was the first American edition of this work, which had been printed four times in Germany before.

*Glückliche Genügsamkeit der Stillen in Lande.* By Gerhard Tersteegen.

*Eine Teutsch und Englische Grammatic.*

*Bruderliches Schreiben.*

*Lovignies verborgnes Leben mit Christo.*

*Eine Leich-Predig.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

With the June number of the year before "*Der Hoch-Deutsch*" had been dropped from the title of Sower's newspaper, leaving it as above.

1748.

*Eine Kurtze Beschreibung einer langen Reise aus Babylon nach Bethel.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*Ercheinungen der Geister.*

First edition in 1744.

*Frell, Georg, von Chur in Graubündner Land. Von dem wahren, ewigen Friedsamen Reiche Christi.*

*Andreas Freyen seine Declaration.*

*Eine Gründliche Anweisung zu einem Heiligen Leben zu gelangen.*

*Ein Gründliches Zeugniß gegen das kürtzlich herausgegebene Büchlein, genandt Plain Truth.*

“Plain Truth” was written and printed by Benjamin Franklin. It proposed a plan of united action and urged the people to take up arms in defense of their country. Sower printed this reply in a tract of 24 octavo pages and distributed the edition gratuitously. It is a strong plea for peace, maintaining that God will keep his people without requiring them to fight with carnal weapons.

*Kurtzer und erbaulicher Ausszug.* By Christian Hohburg.

*Kurtze Beschreibung des Lebens und Todtes von Jacob Schmiedlein aus Wollhausen.*

*Eine Kurtze Vermittelungs-Schrift.*

*Jacob Lischys Reformirten Predigers zweyte Declaration seines Sinnes an seine Reformirte Religions-Genossen in Pennsylvanien.*

*Ein Mystischer das ist ein vor der alten Natur und Vernunft und Eigenheit verborgener Seelen Spiegel.*

*Der Sigenische Catechismus.*

*Warnungs-Schreiben wider die Leichtsinnigkeit.* By Geret. Tersteegen.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Verschiedene Christliche Wahrheiten, und Kurtze Beirachtung über das kürtzlich herausgegebene Büchlein, Genandt Lautere Wahrheit.*

This is another attack on “Plain Truth,” and was given away.

*Ein Christ besuchet oft und gerne die Zions-Kinder nah und ferne.*

*Kurtze Vertheidigung.*

*Noch mehr Zeugnisse der Wahrheit.*

*Seelenspielbel.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1749.

*Thomas a Kempis. Vier Bücher von der Nachfolger Christi.*

*Thomas a Kempis. The Christian Pattern, or the Imitation of Jesus Christ.*

This as the title shows was printed in English, and is the first English work of which I have found trace issued by the Sower press, except “Extracts from the Laws of William Penn,” printed in 1740. It seems that about 1749 Christopher Sower, Jr., assumed the oversight of the book binding department, and as he was a good English scholar this broadening of the business was in all probability due to his influence.

*Lischy, Jacob. V. D. M. Prediger der Reformirten Gemeinden über die Susquachanna in Pennsylvanien.*

*Treuherzige und Einfältige Anweisung, wie sich solche Gutwillige Seelen zu verhalten haben.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*Sie bekehren sich aber nicht rech.* By J. J. Zubly.  
*Habermans Gebet Buchlein.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*  
*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1750.

*Göttliche Liebes-Andacht mit einer Anweisung und Unterricht.*

*Der Kleine Kempis.*

*Schule der Weisheit in Reimen oder Hochdeutsches A B C vor Schüler und Meister in Israel.*

*The Archbishop of Cambray's Dissertation on Pure Love.* By Fenelon.

*Anleitung zur Englischen Sprache.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1751.

*Ausbund.*

This contains more songs than the edition of 1742.

*Eine Nützliche Anweisung Oder Beyhülfe vor die Deutschen um Englisch zu lernen.*

*Tersteegens Der Frommen Lotterie.*

*Evangelisches Zeugnuss vom Elend und Erlösung der Menschen.* By J. J. Zubly

*Einige Gedichte und Lieder.*

*Von der Menschen Erloesung.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

In the imprints of this year the printer sometimes spells his name *Saur* and at other times *Sauer*. It is

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

not known whether this was by design or by chance.  
If by design the reason for the variation is not known.

1752.

*Evangelisches Zeugnuss von der falschen Fleisches-Religion in allen Secten der Christenheit.*

*Geistreiche Lieder.*

The first Reformed hymn book printed in America.  
*Bekantnuss eines Christen.* By Thomas Imbroich.

This is the supplement that was added to the *Ausbund* published in 1751.

*Der Kleine Catechismus des sel. Dr. Martin Luthers.*

*Unpartheyische Gedancken in Reimen bey Einweihung einer Evangelischen Kirche in Germanton.*  
By H. M. Mühlenberg.

It will be observed that this is the Lutheran clergyman who so mercilessly and unreasonably denounced Sower's Bible some nine years before this.

*Wächter-Stimm aus dem verwüsteten Sion.* By J. Conrad Steiner.

*Heidelberg Catechismus.*

*Ausbund.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1753.

*Die Kleine geistliche Harfe.*

A Mennonite hymn book.

*Die Neue Acte.*

*Neu-vermehrt-und vollständiges Gesang-Buch.*

*Das Mennonisten Liederbuch.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*Der Wunderbahrer Bussfertige Seelensorger.*

*Der letzte Wille des hochfürstlichen Printzen Dieterichs von Anhalt Dessau.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*The fatal Consequences of the unscriptural Doctrine of Predestination and Reprobation.*

*The Description and Use of the Globes, celestial and terrestrial.* By T. Grew.

*The Everlasting Gospel, commanded to be preached by Jesus Christ, Judge of the Living and the Dead.*  
By Paul Siegvolck.

1754.

*Ein Gespräch zwischen einem Jüngling und einem Alten.* By John Hildebrand.

*Der Wunderbare bussfertige Beichtvater und Seel-Sorger Herr M. Aaron.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*Christian Education.*

*The Pennsylvania Town and Countrymen's Almanac for 1755.*

These last two publications, in English, bear the imprint of Christopher Sower, Jr. These almanacs were printed for some five or six years and must not be confused with the Sower German almanacs with which they had little in common.

1755

*Ein Bettler und doch kein Bettler.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*J. Bunians Pilgrims-oder Christen Reise.*

*Das angenechme opfer.* By J. Bunyan.

*Reise aus Babylon nach Bethel.* By Stephen Crisp.

*Treuhertzige Erinnerung und Warnung.* By Henry Kemper.

*Das Kinder-Büchlein in den Brüder-Gemeinen.*

*Das Neue Testament.*

This was the second edition printed by Sower and contained a preface written by him.

*Höchst nöthige Warnung und Erinnerung an die freye Einwohner der Provintz Pensylvanien.* By Ch. Saur.

The appeal to the Germans to assert and guard their rights as freemen against schemes to deprive them of these rights, which I have translated in a former chapter.

*Das Leben Gottes in der Scelle des Menschen.* By H. Skougal.

*Geschichten von Erscheinungen der Geister.*

*Heidelberger Catechismus.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1756

*Eine Erinnerung an die Englische Nation, dasz ein jeder die rechte Zeit wahrnehmen soll.* By Thomas Chamberlain.

*Die Göttliche Beschützung ist der Menschen gewisseste Hülfe und Beschirmung.* By Jonathan Dickinson.

*Eine Erzählung von den Trübsalen und der Wunder-*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

bahren Befreyung so geschehen an William Flemming und dessen Weib Elisabeth.

*Des Ehrwürdigen Lehrers David Imries, Predigers in St. Mungo in Schottland.* By D. Imrie.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*The Uncertainty of a Death-bed Repentance.* By Fenelon.

*The Real Christian's Hope in Death.* By J. J. Zubly.

*The Nature and Design of Christianity.*

*A Pattern of Christian Education Agreeable to the Precepts and Practices of our Blessed Lord.*

These last two bear the imprint of Christ. Sower, Jr.

1757.

*Der Inhalt von den verschiedenen Conferentzen, welche einige Freunde in Philadelphia mit Etlichen Indianern gehalten, U. S. W., in den Monathen July und November 1756.*

*Der Inhalt von den verschiedenen Conferentzen U. S. W., in dem Monath July und August 1757.*

*Some Gospel Treasures, or the Holiest of all Unveiling.* By John Everard, D. D.

*Eine Neutzliche Anweisung.*

*Marburger Gesangbuch.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1758.

*Ein Spiegel der Eheleute.*

*Some observations upon a late Piece entitled, The Detection detected.* By A. Gellatly.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.  
Pensylvanische Berichte.*

1759.

*Christliche Morgen-und Abend-Gebäter.  
Marburger Gesang-Buch.*

This was the first Luthern hymn book printed in America. It was a 16mo volume of 155 pages and was divided into twelve parts.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.  
Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*Observations on the Inslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes.* By Anthony Benezet.

The issue of this pamphlet is part of the warfare waged by the Sowers against the institution of slavery. They wrote and spoke against it whenever occasion presented itself. Because of their great influence they succeeded pretty effectually in deterring the Germans from taking any hand in the nefarious traffic. Shortly before the Revolution Sower could still write, "Up to the present this godless traffic could find no safe footing in Pennsylvania, because of the abhorrence the Germans still have for it."

Thus a hundred years before slavery was abolished, the leading members in the Dunker church were stoutly opposing the institution as nefarious and godless. This has always been the position of the church on this question.

*The Way to the Sabbath of Rest.* By Thomas Bromley.

*The Journeys of the Children of Israel.* By Thomas Bromley.

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*A Treatise of Extraordinary Dispensations under the Jewish and Gospel Administrations.* By Thomas Bromley.

*A Discourse on Mistakes concerning Religion, Enthusiasm, etc.* By Thomas Hartley.

1760

*Evangelien und Epistelen auf alle Sonntage wie auch auf die hohen Feste.*

*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel.*

*Eine Anmuthige Erinnerung zu einer Christlichen Betrachtung.* By Alexander Mack.

*Der Psalter des Königs und Propheten Davids.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*Observations on the Inslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes.* By A. Benezet. Second edition.

*Certain agreements and concessions made....for erecting and establishing a School House and School in Germantown.*

These agreements resulted in establishing the Germantown Academy, which was opened in September of the next year. Christopher Sower was one of the leading promoters of the enterprise and served for a number of years on the Board of Trustees of the Academy. The school maintained an English and a German department and is still in a flourishing condition. This was the first educational enterprise in which the Dunkers took a direct interest of which there is any record.

*Christ's Spirit a Christian's Strength.* By W. Dell.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*The Stumbling Stone, wherein the University is Reproved.* By W. Dell.

*The Uncertainty of a Death Bed Repentance.* By Fenelon.

1761.

*Das Leben und heroische Thaten des Königs von Preussen, Friedrichs des III.*

*Die Naturalisation-Form derjenigen, welche ohne Eid mit dem Quäker-attest naturalisirt werden.*

*Das Neue Testament.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

In this number of the almanac was begun the "Kräuterbuch" or lessons in botany, which were continued for eighteen years.

*Pensylvanische Berichte.*

*Habermans Grosses Gebet Buch.*

*Habermans Kleines Gebet Buch.*

*Dreierlei Deutschen und Englischen A B C Bücher.*

1762.

*Habermans Kleines Christlich Gebätbuch.*

*New-Eingerichtetes Gesang-Buch.*

A hymn book for the Schwenkfelders containing 760 12mo pages.

*Beyhülfe vor die Teutschen um Englisch zu lernen.*

*Der Psalter des Königs und Propheten Davids.*

*Marburger Gesang-Buch.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauner Zeitung, Oder; Sammlung Wahrscheinlicher Nachrichten aus dem Natur-und Kirchenreich.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

The second Christopher Sower was troubled much as his father had been before him by the fact that the news printed in his paper did not always turn out to be true. In order to free himself from this load, he removed during this year the word *Wichtig* (important) from the title and inserted *Wahrscheinlich* (probable) in its place.

1763.

*Biblia,*

The second edition of the quarto Bible.

*Der Kleine Darmstädtische Catechismus Herrn D. Martin Luthers.*

*Neu-vermehrt und vollständiges Gesang-Buch.*

*Das Neue Testament.*

*Die heilbringende Menschwerdung und der herrliche Sieg Jesu Christi über den Teufel und Tod*  
By W. Otterbein.

*Die Wandlende Seel.* By J. P. Schabalie.

Schabalie was a Mennonite preacher. His "Wandering Soul" has been a very popular book. The great Biblical events are told by the characters who figured prominently in them. For instance Noah tells of his narrow escape from the flood, how the animals behaved in the ark, and how he cared for the specimens of plants entrusted to his keeping.

*Zeugniss der Wahrheit.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauer Zeitung.*

*The Dreadful Visitation, in a short Account of the Progress and Effects of the Plague.* By D. Defoe.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*A Short, Easy and Comprehensive Method of Prayer.* By J. Kelpius.

1764.

*Die allmächtige Errettungs-Hand Gottes aus den wilden Meeres Wellen.*

*Christliche Morgen und Abend Gebäter.*

*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel.*

*Die Regeln der Teutschen Gesellschaft in Philadelphia.*

*Das Anhangen an Gott.* By Tersteegen.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauner Zeitung.*

*Ein Geistliches Magazien, Oder: Aus den Schätzen der Schriftgelehrten zum Himmelreich gelehrt, dargestaltetes Altes und Neues.*

An account of this magazine was given in a former chapter.

*Anmerkungen über Ein noch nie erhört und gesehen Wunder-Thier in Pennsylvanien, genannt Streit-und Strausz-Vogel.*

*Eine zu dieser Zeit Höchst nöthige Warnung an die freye Einwohner der Provinz Pennsylvanien.*

A political tract against a scheme to restrict the free suffrage of the Germans.

*Protestation gegen die Bestellung Herrn Benjamin Franklins zu einem Agenten für diese Provinz.*

By the influence of the Germans Franklin had been defeated in the election for Assemblyman in the fall of 1764. It was then proposed to send him to London as

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the agent of Pennsylvania. This pamphlet expresses the German opposition to this plan.

*Anmerkungen über eine neuliche Protestation gegen die Bestellung Hrn. Benjamin Franklins.*

Franklin's reply to the above.

1765.

*Des Gottseligen und Hocherleuchteten Lehrers, Hrn. Johann Arnds.*

*Die Erste Frucht der Teutschen Gesellschaft.*

*Wertheime Landes-Leute, sonderlich in Philadelphia, Bucks und Bercks County.* By Christopher Sower.

A political address by Christopher Sower on the two leading questions of the day. These were first the proposition to change the government of Pennsylvania by removing the proprietary government and making it a royal colony; and second the repeal of the Stamp Act. Sower disapproved of a change of government, but favored calling a convention to petition the King for a repeal of the Stamp Act.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauer Zeitung.*

*Antwort auf Herrn Franklins Anmerkungen.*

*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1766.

*Die Regeln der Teutschen Gesellschaft in Philadelphia.*

*Das Neue Testament.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Germantauner Zeitung.*  
*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1767.

*Ausbundt.*

*Kurtze Unterweisung vor Kleine Kinder.*  
*Confession, oder Bekentniss Eines Christen.*  
*Bericht von den Brüdern in der Schweitz.*  
*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*  
*Germantauner Zeitung.*  
*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1768.

*Die Wandlende Seel.* By J. P. Schabalie.  
*Der Psalter des Königs und Propheten Davids.*

*Das von Jesu Christo, dem Richter der Lebendigen und Todten, aller Creatur zu predigen befohlene Ewige Erangelium von der durch Ihn erfundenen Ewigen Erlosung.* By George Paul Siegvolck.

*Ein Merkwürdigen Traum.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauner Zeitung.*

*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1769.

*Geistliches Blumen-Gärtlein Inniger Seelen.*

*Das Neue Testament.*

*Das von Jesu Christo, dem Richter der Lebendigen und Todten.* By George Paul Siegvolck.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauner Zeitung.*

*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*The Sentiments and Plans of the Warren Association.*

1770

*Nachrichters: Oder Nützliches und aufrichtiges Rosz-Artsney-Büchlein.* By J. Deigendesch.

*Eine Einfältige und gründlich abgefasste Schul-Ordnung.* By Christopher Dock.

Christopher Dock had been Christopher Sower's old schoolmaster. This interesting little book on pedagogy was written as early as 1750. But the diffident old pedagogue refused to allow it to be printed during his lifetime. He was prevailed upon, however, to submit the manuscript to the care of his esteemed pupil, on the condition that it should not be printed until after his death. In this year two editions were printed, containing a preface of six octavo pages supplied by Sower's pen.

*Einfältige Lehr-Betrachtungen und Kurtzgefasstes Glaubens-Bekanntnissz des gottseligen Lehrers Michael Frantzen.* By Michael Frantz.

Frantz was a minister in the Dunker church in the Conestoga region. His book, partly in prose and partly in verse, has been described and in part quoted in a previous chapter.

*Die Paradiesische Alve der Jungfräulichen Keuschheit.* By Samuel Lucius.

*Vollständiges Marburger Gesang-Buch.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Germantauner Zeitung.*

*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

1771.

- Nachrichters: Oder Nützliches und aufrichtiges Ross-Artsney Büchlein.* By John Deigendesch.  
*Die Wandlende Seel.* By John Philip Schabalie.  
*Der Weg der Gottseligkeit.*  
*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*  
*Germantauner Zeitung.*  
*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1772.

- Neu-vermehrt-und vollständiges Gesang-Buch.*  
*Eine nutzliche Anweisung oder Beyhülffe vor Deutsche um Englisch zu lernen.*  
*Neujahrs Geschenk.*  
*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*  
*Die Germantauner Zeitung.*  
*Ein Geistliches Magazien.*

1773.

- Der Kleine Kempis.*  
*Geistliches Blumen-Gärtlein Inniger Seelen.* By Tersteegen.  
*Der Psalter Davids.*  
*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*  
*Die Germantauner Zeitung.*

1774.

- Der Geschwinden Rechner.* By Daniel Fenning.  
*Grundforschende Fragen, welche denen nenen Taufern Im Wittgensteinischen, insonderheit zu beantworten vorgelegt waren.* By Eberhard Ludwig Grüber.  
The New Baptists of Wittgenstein were of course

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

the Dunkers. Guber's ground-searching Questions were addressed to the newly organized congregation in 1713 and were replied to by Alexander Mack in the same year.

*Kurtze und einfältige Vorstellung der äussern, aber doch heiligen Rechten und Ordnungen des Hauses Gottes.* By Alexander Mack.

This is Mack's famous work usually known as the Rites and Ordinances, from which I have quoted in a former chapter. It was to this edition printed by Sower that Alexander Mack the second prefaced a brief history of the organization of the church at Schwarzenau in 1708, from which I have quoted in the first chapter of this work. This historical matter is of great value and gives unusual importance to this edition.

*Nachdrückliche Buss-Stimme und Warnungs-Posaune vom Himmel an alle boshaften Sünder auf Erden.*

*Vollständiges Marburger Gesangbuch.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Dic Germantauner Zeitung.*

*The Ready Reckoner.* By Daniel Fenning.

1775.

*Hoch-Deutsches Lutherisches A B C und Namen-Büchlein.*

For children who are beginning to learn.

*Das Neue Testament.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Die Germantauner Zeitung.*

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

1776.

*Biblia.*

The third edition of the famous Sower Bibles.

*Christliche Morgen-und Abend-Gebäter.* By J. Habermann.

This *Die Kinder Bibel* was a small 24mo volume of 487 pages.

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Die Germantauener Zeitung.*

This year the paper was issued in the name of *Christoph Saur und Sohn.*

*Das Alte Zeugnis und die Grund-Sätze des Volkes so man Quäker nennet . . . . gedruckt bey Christoph Saur, dem Jüngern.*

This Christopher Sower, Jr., was the third of the name and the oldest son of the second Christopher, the well-known bishop of the Dunker church.

*Apologie Oder Vertheidigungs-Schrift der wahren Christlichen Gottesgelahrtheit.* By Robert Barclay.

*Der Tod Abels.* By Solomon Geszner.

This and the preceding bear the imprint of *Christoph Saur, dem Jüngern.*

1777.

*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel.*

*Vollständiges Marburger Gesangbuch.*

*An die Deutschen in Amerika.* By A. Emmerich.

Emmerich was a Hessian. His pamphlet was a passionate appeal to the Germans in America to remain loyal to England.

*Der Kleine Catechismus.*

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Die Germantauner Zeitung.*

*Weg und Werke Gottes in der Bekehrung.*

*Treuhertzige Warnung eines Bruders in Christo.*

*Die Uebung der Gegenwart Gottes.*

The last three are assigned to this year on the authority of Rev. A. Stapleton, although they are undated and the year of their publication has not been positively determined.

*Gespräch Zwischen einer Pilger und Burger auf Ihre Reise nach der Ewigkeit.*

*Proclamation. Eine durch Seine Excellenz, Sir William Howe . . . herausgegebene Proclamation.*

*Der Pennsylvanische Staats Courier.*

A good deal of uncertainty surrounds the work of the Sower press during this year. The management of the business was changed once if not twice. The first two books mentioned above in this year bear the imprint of *Christoph Saur, Germantown*. The third and fourth in the list have in the Germantown imprint the names of *Christoph Saur und Peter Saur*. The last two in this list were printed in Philadelphia by *Christ. Saur, Jr., und Peter Saur*. The printing plant was moved from Germantown to Philadelphia in the early part of this year. The number of the *Germantauner Zeitung* dated March 19, 1777, states that the editor has moved to a house adjoining the Quaker meetinghouse in Philadelphia and will there continue his business. The two men now in charge of the Sower press are two of the sons of the second Christopher, the third generation of the Sowers,

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Christopher the third and Peter. The titles of the publication of this year show the changed political complexion of the Sower press. The first two Christopher Sowers had been staunch supporters of colonial rights and stoutly opposed English encroachments. The third generation cast in their lot with the loyalists and exerted themselves for the royal cause.

1778.

*Einige Gedichte und Lieder.* By Johann Christoph Kunze.

*Der Pennsylvanische Staats-Courier.*

These were printed in Philadelphia and the imprint reads *Christoph und Peter Saur.* When the British army left Philadelphia in June of this year Christopher (3rd) and Peter Sower went with it, and the Sower printing establishment ceased to exist. It is not probable that more than a small portion of the original Germantown plant was moved to Philadelphia. The establishment was seized by the British in 1777, on the ground that Christopher Sower (the Second) was a rebel. The large and valuable property was confiscated and sold, and what escaped in this way was ruthlessly destroyed.

### C.—ISSUES OF THE LEIBERT PRESS.

1784.

Six years after the destruction of the Sower publishing house Peter Leibert and Michael Billmeyer set up a German press in Germantown. As their outfit consisted largely of the confiscated stock of the Sower

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

establishment, we may consider it as a sort of continuation of that plant. The following publications for the year 1784 have been discovered.

*Ein Brief, Weiland von Peter Bläser an seinen Freund Michael Billmeyer.*

*Der Kleine Catechismus.*

*Das Lutherische und Reformirte A B C und Namenbüchlein.*

*Der Psalter des Königs und Propheten Davids.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender. Auf Das Jahr 1785. Zum Erstenmal herausgegeben.*

This was a resuscitation of the Sower almanacs, which it resembled in every respect, but was numbered as a new series.

1785.

*Ausbund.*

*Ein Aufsatz oder Vertheidigung von Christian Funk.*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Die Germantauer Zeitung.*

February 8 of this year the Sower newspaper was brought into being again. It was now increased in size and the price was raised, as was shown in a former chapter.

1786.

*Catechismus oder Kurzer Unterricht Christlicher Lehre.*

For the German Reformed.

*Der Kleine Catechismus des sel. Dr. M. Luther.*

*Erbauliche Lieder-Sammlung.*

A Lutheran hymn book.

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

*Kurze Andachten einer Gottsuchenden Seele.*

*Tagebuch der General Assembly der Republic Pennsylvania (1786-1787),*

*Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender.*

*Die Germantauner Zeitung.*

In August of 1786 Leibert and Billmeyer dissolved partnership. Billmeyer continued the business at the old stand, while Leibert set up independently in another part of the town.

1788.

*Geistliche Morgen-und Abendgebäter.* By Joh. Habermann.

*Der Kleine Kempis.*

*Liebliche und erbauliche Lieder.*

The works of this year and for several years following bear in the Germantown imprint only the name of Peter Leibert.

1790.

*Habermanns Christliche Morgen-und Abendgebeter.*

*Hoch-Deutsches Lutherisches A B C und Namen-Büchlein.*

1791.

*Tersteegens Geistiges Blumengärtlein inniger Seelen.*

*The Christian's Duty, exhibited in a Series of Hymns.*

This was the first Dunker hymn book, of which I have already spoken. It consisted of 320 12mo pages.

The works of this year bear the imprint of "Peter Leibert und Sohn."

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

1792.

*Eine nützliche Anweisung oder Beyhülfe vor die  
Teutschen um Englisch zu lernen.*

*Zublins Evangelisches Zeugnisz.*

This year the imprint reads simply Peter Leibert again and remains so.

1793.

*Gerhard Tersteegens Lebensbeschreibung.*

*Des seligen Gerhard Tersteegens hinterlaszene Er-  
klärung seines Sinnes.*

*Tobias Hirtes Der Freund in der Noth.*

1794.

*Dr. Joh. Habermanns von Eger Christlich Gebät-  
Buch.*

*Schabalies Die Wandlende Seel.*

1795.

*Habermanns Christliche Morgen-und Abend-Gebe-  
ter.*

*Der Kleine Kempis.*

1796.

*Eines Christen Reise nach der Seligen Ewigkeit.* By John Bunyan.

*Kurtze Beschreibeng von den Leben und Sterben  
von Joh. Bunyan.*

*Gedanken über die Rechtmässigkeit der Kriege.*

*The New England Primer.*

1797.

*High German A B C Book.*

The foregoing is the most complete list of the Sower

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

publications that has yet been made. It is believed that it contains all that are at this time known to exist. That still others may be brought to light in future is very probable. Reckoning as above, by years, and counting the periodicals for each year as one, the issues of the Sower press proper here catalogued number 335. If those of Leibert are added the whole number becomes 372.

The range covered by these works too is somewhat extensive. The greater part of the entire output are religious or moral treatises. The three editions of the quarto Bible are of course the most famous. Besides these were no less than seven editions of the New Testament in addition to several issues of the Psalms, and a Children's Bible.

The Sower press also supplied most of the religious sects of the time with hymn books. It will be recalled that the first book printed in America in German type was the famous *Weyrauchs-Hügel*, printed by Sower for the Zionitic Brotherhood at Ephrata. With this as a beginning, during the following years the Sower press printed hymn books for the Dunkers, the Lutherans, the Reformed, the Mennonites, the Schwenfelders, the Ephrataites and the Moravians. Of some of these several editions were printed, and a popular collection known as *Das Kleine Davidische Psalter-spiel*, which was undenominational, was issued no less than four times by this press.

Catechisms for the Lutherans, the Reformed and the Moravians were also issued several times. As early as 1740 George Whitfield's sermons were printed

## Literary Activity of the Brethren

from an English edition. William Law's *Grounds and Reasons for Christian Baptism* appeared only a year later. In 1743 Sower printed Hochmann's *Confession of Faith*, and during the same year three of the mystical works of John Hildebrand, one of the leaders of Ephrata. This is sufficient to give some idea of the wealth of this kind of literature put out by the Sower press from the first.

While it was a leading purpose of the Sowers to supply the German population in America with such reading matter as would direct their minds towards the right kind of religious and moral ideals, they by no means restricted themselves to this. They kept in view also the practical. The first Christopher Sower wrote and spoke extensively on the political issues of his day. He used his newspaper as a means of keeping before his fellow countrymen their rights as citizens of the province. His editorials were apt to be directed against abuses, or practices and principles that he regarded as harmful. In 1765 he delivered an address on the political issues of the day that attracted considerable public attention.

The almanacs, too, contain a great deal of useful information of a practical sort. In this respect they were not an unworthy competitor of Franklin's Poor Richard series.

Educational books, also, were by no means wanting. In 1751 an English-German Grammar was issued, especially as an aid for the Germans to learn English. This was a 12mo volume of 287 pages. Two editions of this work were printed later, in 1762 and

## Writers of the Eighteenth Century

1772. In 1770 the second Sower issued two editions of Christopher Dock's "*Schul-Ordnung*" or Pedagogy. This is one of the earliest specimens of pedagogics produced in this country. In 1775 he printed a High German A B C Book for Children who are beginning to learn.

The same year with Dock's Pedagogy appeared a horse-doctor book, "*Ross-Artzney-Buchlein*," a small-sized volume of over two hundred pages. In 1743 Sower printed the charter of Pennsylvania in a large quarto pamphlet of 55 pages and gave the copies away to all the subscribers of his paper.

It is also interesting to note that one of the first magazines in this country was Sower's "*Geistliche Magazien*," published from 1764 to 1772.

Pure literature also was not wanting. The very year in which the Sower press was set up is characterized by the publication of at least two popular German ballads. In 1755 the first Christopher issued Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. This was before an English edition of this famous work had appeared on the American continent.

[THE END.]



# INDEX

- Academy, Germantown, ..... 264  
Agape, ..... 33  
Almanac, ..... 56, 132  
    Contents of specimen number, ..... 140  
    Description and history of, ..... 132  
    Krauterbuch, ..... 141, 275, 311  
    Last issue, ..... 137  
    Popularity of, ..... 144  
    People's confidence in, ..... 138  
    Revised History of England, ..... 143  
Amwell, New Jersey, first Dunker church organized by  
    John Naas, in 1733, ..... 28  
Andreas Freyen seine declaration, etc. By Andrew Frey. 235  
Apologia, or Scriptural Answers, ..... 252  
Appendix, ..... 291-327  
Appendix to Refuted Anabaptists, ..... 252  
Arnold, Gottfried, Pietist leader, ..... 3  
Baptism, ..... 15, 18, 31  
    of first members in River Eder, ..... 14, 15, 18  
    of Alexander Mack, Who performed? ..... 20  
    of Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochenau, ..... 12  
    Alexander Mack's view of, ..... 10  
    Hochmann's view of, ..... 10  
Becker, Peter, ..... 200-206  
    First leader of Dunkers in America, ..... 26, 28, 167  
    Literary labors of, ..... 203  
    Hymn, ..... 204  
Beissel, Conrad, elder of Conestoga church, ..... 43, 229  
    Withdrawal from church, ..... 44, 65, 221  
    Dispute with Christopher Sower about hymns in  
        Weyrauchs-Hügel, ..... 62, 193-197  
Bibles, Berleberg, ..... 53, 68, 69, 112, 292  
    Halle, ..... 68, 84  
    Wittenberg, ..... 85  
    Sower, Account of the printing of, ..... 88  
        Description of, ..... 88  
        Difficulties attending the printing of, ..... 76-82  
        First edition of, ..... 99  
        Honor to German nation, ..... 105  
    Ink used in, ..... 78, 108

## Index

- Opposition to, ..... 84, 90  
Paper used in, ..... 78, 108  
Presented to Dr. Luther, ..... 97  
Price of, ..... 85  
Rarity and value of, ..... 100, 111  
Second edition of, ..... 100  
Type used in, ..... 78, 97, 98, 108, 109  
Third edition of, ..... 105  
Third edition of compared with other two, ..... 108  
Title page of ..... 87, 102, 109, 110  
Billmeyer, Michael, ..... 158, 321  
Bony, Andrew, ..... 23  
    Baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Bony, Joanna, baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Bradford, Andrew, ..... 38  
Brethren, ..... 17  
    Number in Europe, ..... 25, 27  
Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, ..... 327  
Cassell, Abraham H., ..... 53, 131  
Christliche Bibliothek. By George Adam Martin, ..... 287  
Christopher Sower's Printing Press, ..... 37-67  
Chronicon Ephratense, ..... 43, 225  
Communion, The, ..... 35  
Copia der Proclamation unsers Governeurs, ..... 116  
Corner in paper, ..... 60  
Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel, ..... 325  
Declaration of Independence, ..... 127  
Der Hoch-Deutsch Pennsylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber, ..... 113-120  
    First German newspaper in America, ..... 113  
    History and description of, ..... 132, 134  
Der Hoch-Deutsch Pennsylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber, ..... 113  
    Translation of, ..... 114-120  
    Sower's object in printing, ..... 121  
    Sower's plans and policy, ..... 122  
Der Kinder Bieble, ..... 106  
Der Kleine Kempis, ..... 255  
Der Pennsylvanische Staats Courier, ..... 131, 288, 320, 321  
Destruction of Sower printing establishment, 107, 108, 128, 321  
Die Ehe des Zuchthaus fleischlicher Menschen, ..... 45  
Die Germantauer Zeitung, ..... 125, 128, 158, 322  
    Proceedings of Pennsylvania State Legislature, ..... 159  
Die Philadelphische Zeitung, ..... 49, 50, 131  
Dock, Christopher, ..... 261  
    Books, ..... 327  
Donner, Jacob, ..... 287

## Index

Duboy, Abraham, .....	22
Dunkers, .....	1
Church organized, .....	41
First literary work of, .....	12
in America, .....	200, 265
in Germany, .....	183
Unique position first published, .....	183
Eckerling, Israel, leader at Ephrata, .....	43
Left Ephrata, .....	225, 243, 244
Eckerling, Michael, .....	22
Einfältige, etc. By Michael Frantz, .....	208
Ephrata Community, History of, .....	65-67
Ernstliche Ermahnung, .....	55
Europe, Work produced in, .....	290
Faith and Practice of church, .....	30
Feast of Love, .....	33
Feet-washing, .....	30
First German type made in America, .....	156
Francke, August Herman, Pietist leader, .....	3
Franklin, Benjamin, .....	38, 49, 113, 130
Franklin's corner in paper, .....	60
Frantz, Michael, History of, .....	206-213
Confession of Faith, etc., .....	208
Frey, Andrew, History of, .....	233-240
Gass, Jacob, .....	43, 52
Gantz, George Balser, .....	22
Gazette, The Royal, .....	132, 289
Geistliches Magazein, .....	145-157
A thank-offering, .....	149
Character of contents, .....	151
Circulation, .....	154
First German magazine in America, .....	145
Honor to American journalism, .....	157
Value of existing copies, .....	154, 155
Genesis of the Brethren church, .....	1-36
German Baptists, Origin of, .....	1
Called Pietists, .....	3
Not Pietists, .....	17
Emigration to America, .....	26
End of organization in Europe, .....	28
First members, .....	15
First leader, Alexander Mack, .....	4
Growth of church in Europe, .....	21, 23
Growth of church in America, .....	28
Membership in Europe, .....	25, 27
Persecution in Germany, .....	4, 17, 22, 24

## Index

- Principles of church, ..... 29-33  
German newspaper, First in America, ..... 38  
Germantown Academy, ..... 310  
Germantown church, first in America, ..... 26  
Organized, ..... 28, 202  
Germantown, location of Sower printing establishment, .. 26  
Religious and literary center of Dunkers in America, 161  
Germantauner Zeitung, ..... 125, 128, 158, 159, 322, 323  
Geschicht-Schreiber, ..... 51  
Greby, George, ..... 23  
Baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Ground-Searching Questions. By Alexander Mack, 169, 178-182  
Gruber's Queries, ..... 178, 181  
Hildebrand, John, History of, ..... 220-228  
Writings of, ..... 225  
Hochmann, Ernst Christoph von Hohenau, Pietist leader, 3  
Church membership, ..... 12  
Confession of Faith, ..... 5  
Imprisonment at Detmold, ..... 5  
Relations with Alexander Mack, ..... 4  
View of baptism, ..... 10  
Hoch-Deutsch Pennsylvanische Berichte, ..... 123  
Ink, used in Sower Bibles, ..... 78  
Ephrata, ..... 79  
Inner Communion with God. By Michael Frantz, ..... 208  
Introduction, ..... iii  
Issues of the Leibert press, ..... 321-324  
Kalkloser, John Henry, ..... 22  
Kipping, John, ..... 15, 18, 23  
Baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Joanna, baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Koch, Stephen, ..... 22  
History of, ..... 228-233  
Klein, George, ..... 288  
Krauterbuch, ..... 141, 275, 311  
Kurtzer Begriff, ..... 91  
Laws of William Penn, extracts from, ..... 294  
Leibert and Billmeyer, ..... 159, 323  
Peter, ..... 136, 158, 281-285, 323, 324  
Press, Issues of, ..... 321-324  
Letter from Christopher Sower to Conrad Beissel, ..... 187-193  
Letterman, Daniel, ..... 288  
Libe, Christian, ..... 22, 27, 28  
Luther, Dr. Ehrenfried, ..... 97, 98, 99  
Mack, Alexander, Sr., ..... 163-183

## Index

- Author of Ground-Searching Questions, ..... 169  
Author of Rites and Ordinances, ..... 169  
Baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Came to America, ..... 26, 167  
Evangelist, ..... 4, 14, 155  
First minister, ..... 4, 14, 166, 167  
Hardships and persecutions, ..... 166  
Leader of mother church in Europe, 14, 26, 163, 166, 169  
Reformed, ..... 4  
Religious experiences, ..... 164, 165  
Summary of character, ..... 168  
Mack, Alexander, Jr., ..... 241-260  
    Account of organization of church, ..... 18, 19  
    Poems of, ..... 254  
Mack, Anna Margarita, baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Martin, George Adam, ..... 286  
Missionary spirit of the early church, ..... 262  
Mühlenberg, Heinrich Melchoir, ..... 84, 94  
    Agent for Halle Bibles, ..... 84  
Naas, John, ..... 22, 27, 28  
    History of, ..... 213-220  
    Incidents in the life of, ..... 214  
New Testament, printed by Sower, ..... 105, 106  
Of Inner Communion with God. By Michael Frantz, ..... 208  
On the Bringing up of Children. By Michael Frantz, ..... 210  
Paper, Corner in, ..... 60  
    Used in Sower Bible, ..... 78  
Pennsylvanische Berichte, ..... 124  
    Circulation of ..... 154  
Pennsylvanische Staats Courier, ..... 288, 320, 321  
Persecution on account of religion, ..... 3  
Pfautz, Michael, ..... 288  
Pietists, ..... 3  
    Persecution in the German Empire, ..... 4, 17  
Plain Truth, ..... 302  
Plain View, ..... 179  
Preface, ..... vii  
Prices, The, ..... 288  
Psalms of David, ..... 106  
Philadelphische Zeitung, ..... 49, 50  
Reim-Gedicht für die Liebe Jugend. By Alexander Mack,  
    Jr., ..... 247  
Reformed, congregation received at Creyfelt, ..... 24  
Rites and Ordinances. By Alexander Mack, ..... 11, 169-177  
    Compare with Hochmann's Confession of Faith, ..... 11

## Index

English edition, .....	16
German edition, .....	16
Reissued, .....	16
Selections from, .....	170-177
Royal Gazette, .....	132, 289
Sabbatarians, .....	44, 65, 230
Saur, Christopher der Jüngere, .....	127, 245, 260-281
Saur, Christopher der Jüngere und Peter Saur, .....	127
Reverses of fortune, .....	127
Schnorr, Casper Ludwig, .....	95, 96
Schwarzenau, first Dunker church organized, .....	21, 166
Congregation emigrated to America, .....	27
Sower Bibles, .....	68-112
Sower, Christopher, Sr., .....	38, 39, 183-206
Arrived in America, .....	37, 184
as an advertiser, .....	125
as a creditor, .....	126
as an editor, .....	121, 122, 185-199
as a farmer, .....	42
Baptism, .....	42
Career, .....	40
Early life and education, .....	40, 41, 183
Domestic troubles, .....	45, 184
First German printer in America, .....	38, 184
Influence of, .....	130, 162, 184, 185, 193
on public issues, .....	186, 193-199
Seidensticker's comments upon, .....	48
Various occupations, .....	37, 38, 42, 43, 46, 47, 183, 184
Maria Christina, wife of Christopher Sower, Sr., .....	45
left her husband, .....	45, 184
Sower, Christopher the Second, .....	100
Sower, Christopher the Third, .....	127, 288, 299
Sower Press, .....	38
Established, .....	39
Began operations, .....	55
Complete and influential, .....	104, 260, 263
First English work from, .....	298-303
First issue from, .....	54
Issues of with notes, .....	292-321
Last issues from, .....	321
Purchase of, .....	51-54
Sower printing establishment destroyed, .....	107, 108, 128, 321
Sower printing establishment reorganized, .....	157
Sower, Samuel, .....	256
Sower type foundry, .....	246

## Index

- Sower's tract of warning to Germans, ..... 193-199  
Sower's warfare against slavery, ..... 309  
State churches in the German Empire, ..... 3  
State Letters or Brief Compend, ..... 195  
Sunday school, The first, ..... 246  
Sundry old and new stories of the appearance of ghosts,  
etc., ..... 231  
Supper, The, ..... 157  
Taufers, ..... 3, 201  
Traut, John Henry, ..... 22  
The Communion, ..... 35  
The Christian's Duty, ..... 282  
The Royal Gazette, ..... 132, 289  
The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, etc., 130  
The Sower Bibles, ..... 68-112  
The Sower Periodicals, ..... 113-160  
The Supper, ..... 34  
Type for Sower Bible, ..... 78  
Third edition, ..... 108  
Umstad, ..... 22  
Urner, Martin, ..... 288  
Vetter, Luke, ..... 15, 18, 23  
    Baptized in River Eder, ..... 15  
Weyreuchs-Hügel, account of, ..... 58-65, 186  
Witt, Dr. Christopher, ..... 47  
Wittgenstein, a place of refuge, ..... 17  
Work produced in Europe, ..... 290  
Writers of the eighteenth century, ..... 161-327  
Zeitung, Germantauner, ..... 125, 322, 323  
    Circulation of, ..... 128  
    Last issue of, ..... 128  
    Publication of proceedings of Pennsylvania State  
        Legislature, ..... 159  
Zeitung, Philadelphia, ..... 131  
Zeitung, Philadelphische, ..... 49, 50









UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

REC'D LD-URL

LD  
URL

NOV 26 1973

NOV 26 1973

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 657 983 3

